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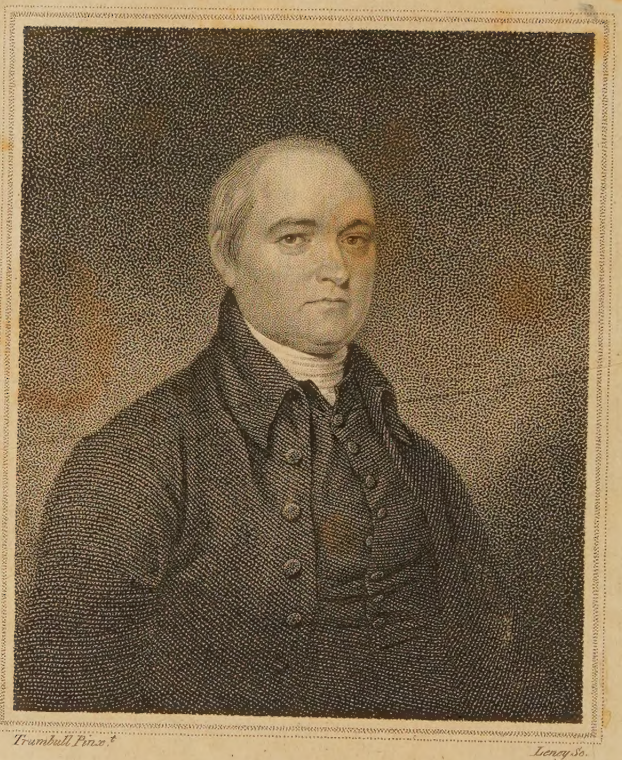

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TIMOTHY DWIGHT S.T.D. L.L.D.

President of Yale College.

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THEOLOGY;

EXPLAINED AND DEFENDED,

IN A

SERIES OF SERMONS;

BY

TIMOTHY DWIGHT, S. T. D. LL. D.
1752-1817
LATE PRESIDENT OF YALE COLLEGE.

WITH A

MEMOIR

OF

THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

THIRD EDITION.

VOL. I.

NEW-HAVEN;

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY S. CONVERSE.

STEREOTYPED BY A. CHANDLER.

1823.

DISTRICT OF CONNECTICUT, ss.

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the fifth day of January, in the forty-second year of the Independence of the United States of America, Timothy Dwight, and William T. Dwight, both of said District; Administrators of the Rev. Timothy Dwight, now deceased, and late of the said District, have deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof they claim as Administrators as aforesaid, and Proprietors, in the words following, *to wit:*

"*Theology; explained and defended, in a Series of Sermons; by Timothy Dwight, S. T. D. LL. D. late President of Yale College. With a Memoir of the Life of the Author. In five Volumes. Vol. I.*"

In conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, "An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned."

R. I. INGERSOLL,
Clerk of the District of Connecticut.

A true copy of Record, examined and sealed by me.

R. I. INGERSOLL,
Clerk of the District of Connecticut.

MEMOIR

OF THE

LIFE OF PRESIDENT DWIGHT.

MEN of letters pass their lives in a course so tranquil and uniform, it is generally supposed, as to furnish but few incidents for the labours of the biographer or the entertainment of his readers. Mankind are attracted rather by what is brilliant in character and daring in action, than by the less splendid achievements of learning and piety. The exploits of the hero are recounted with applause while he is living, and after his death are enrolled with admiration on the records of nations; but the Minister of CHRIST must usually wait to receive his honours in eternity, and expect the due estimate of his labours only as they are written on the tablet of the skies.

There are, however, exceptions to this remark. Sometimes the good man, by the uncommon powers of his mind, by peculiar incidents in his life, by having exerted a commanding influence on the interests of the public, or by having acquired an unusual share in their affections; presents the most attractive subject of biography. Contemporaries indulge a strong desire to view more minutely the life and character of the man, whose living excellence they have often felt and acknowledged; and posterity receive with admiration the history of one who so widely blessed a preceding generation.

The AUTHOR of the following Discourses claims a high rank among men of this class. The testimonies, far and wide, given by the public to his excellence, the heart-felt sorrow so extensively occasioned by his death, and the honours so profusely poured upon his memory; persuade us that we shall be listened to with lively interest, while we attempt, in the following Memoir, to sketch the most important incidents of his life, and to delineate the most striking traits of his character.

TIMOTHY DWIGHT was born at Northampton, in the county of Hampshire, state of Massachusetts, on the 14th day of May, A. D. 1752. His parents were Timothy and Mary Dwight. The first ancestor of his father's family in this country, John Dwight, came from Dedham in England, and settled at Dedham in Massachusetts, in 1637. From him, the subject of this Memoir was descended in the oldest male line; and he was able to look back on each individual in that line, including five generations, and reflect that he

was a member of the Church of Christ, and had a fair reputation for piety. His father received his education at Yale College, where he entered on his bachelor's degree in 1744. He was by profession a merchant, and owned a handsome landed estate in the town in which he lived. He was a man of sound understanding, of fervent piety, and of great purity of life. His mother was the third daughter of Jonathan Edwards, for many years the minister of Northampton, and afterwards president of Nassau-Hall—well known in this country and in Europe as one of the ablest divines of the last century. She possessed uncommon powers of mind, and for the extent and variety of her knowledge, has rarely been exceeded by any of her sex in this country. Though married at an early age, and a mother at eighteen, she found time, without neglecting the ordinary cares of her family, to devote herself with the most assiduous attention to the instruction of this son, and her numerous family of children, as they successively claimed her regard. Perhaps few instances can be found, in which this great duty has been performed with more scrupulous fidelity, than in the case now under consideration. With a mind originally vigorous and discriminating, she had been accustomed from infancy to the conversation of men of literature, who resorted in great numbers to her father's house; and thus was forcibly taught the importance of that learning, the effects of which she had so often had opportunity to witness. It was a maxim with her, the soundness of which her own observation through life fully confirmed, that children generally lose several years, in consequence of being considered by their friends as too young to be taught. She pursued a different course with her son. She began to instruct him almost as soon as he was able to speak; and such was his eagerness as well as his capacity for improvement, that he learned the alphabet at a single lesson; and, before he was four years old, was able to read the Bible with ease and correctness. His father was so extensively engaged in mercantile and agricultural pursuits, that he was necessitated to confide the care of his family, and particularly the superintendence of the early education of his children, chiefly to their mother. With the benefit of his father's example constantly before him, enforced and recommended by the precepts of his mother, he was sedulously instructed in the doctrines of religion, as well as the whole circle of moral duties. She taught him, from the very dawn of his reason, to fear God and to keep his commandments; to be conscientiously just, kind, affectionate, charitable, and forgiving; to preserve, on all occasions and under all circumstances, the most sacred regard to truth; and to relieve the distresses and supply the wants of the poor and unfortunate. She aimed, at a very early period, to enlighten his conscience, to make him afraid to sin, and to teach him to hope for pardon only through the righteousness of Christ. The impressions thus made upon his mind in infancy were never effaced.

A great proportion of the instruction which he received before he arrived at the age of six years, was at home with his mother. Her school-room was the nursery. Here, he had his regular hours for study as in a school; and twice every day she heard him repeat his lesson. Here, in addition to his stated task, he watched the cradle of his younger brothers. When his lesson was recited, he was permitted to read such books as he chose, until the limited period was expired. During these intervals, he often read over the historical parts of the Bible, and gave an account of them to his mother. So deep and distinct was the impression which these narrations then made upon his mind, that their minutest incidents were indelibly fixed upon his memory. His relish for reading was thus early formed, and was strengthened by the conversation and example of his parents. At the age of six, he was sent to the grammar-school, where he early began to importune his father to permit him to study Latin. This was denied, from an impression that he was too young to profit by studies of that description, and the master was charged not to suffer him to engage in them. It was soon found to be in vain to prohibit him: his zeal was too great to be controlled. Not owning the necessary books, he availed himself of the opportunity when the elder boys were at play to borrow theirs; and, in this way, without his father's knowledge or the master's consent, studied through Lilly's Latin Grammar twice. When his master discovered the progress he had made, he applied earnestly to his father, and finally obtained a reluctant consent that he might proceed; though every effort short of compulsion was used to discourage him. He pursued the study of the languages with great alacrity, and would have been prepared for admission into College at eight years of age, had not a discontinuance of the school interrupted his progress, and rendered it necessary for him to be taken home, and placed again under the instruction of his mother. By her, his attention was now directed to the study of Geography and History. With no other help than *Salmon's Grammar*, the only work on the subject then to be procured in the country, and a set of valuable maps of the four quarters of the globe, under the faithful tuition of his mother, he became thoroughly versed in the former science. In the latter, his father's library furnished him with the requisite books; and the wisdom and affection of his mother with the necessary guidance. He was previously familiar with the historical parts of the Bible. She first turned his attention to Josephus and Prideaux, and the more modern history of the Jews. After this he read Rollin, Hooke's History of Rome, Histories of Greece and England, and accounts of the first settlers of New-England, and their wars with the Indians. Often has he been heard to say, that almost all his knowledge of Geography and History was acquired at this period; and it is believed, that few persons have possessed a more extensive or accurate acquaintance with either of these sciences. This domestic

education rendered him fond of home and of the company of his parents, and led him to feel a livelier interest than is usual with boys of the same age, in the conversation of those who were older than himself. It also saved him from the school-boy coarseness and effrontery, often thought, in this rough world, a necessary but by no means an ornamental appendage of the youthful character.

His father was particularly fond of the society of men of education and intelligence; and his hospitable house was the well-known resort of gentlemen of this character. To no one of the family were they more welcome, than to his son. Even at this very early period of life, while listening to their conversation on the character of the great men of the age, both in the colonies and in Europe, a deep and lasting impression was made upon his mind; and he then formed a settled resolution, that he would make every effort in his power to equal those, whose talents and character he had heard so highly extolled.

In his twelfth year, he went to Middletown, for the purpose of pursuing his studies, under the late Rev. Enoch Huntington, a gentleman of high classical attainments. He boarded in the family, and devoted himself to his books with unusual assiduity and success. Not content with the time regularly allotted to study in the school, he spent most of his leisure hours at home in intense application. So entirely was his mind absorbed by his books, that it was no uncommon thing for the members of the family to pass through his room, and even to call him by name, without being perceived by him. During his residence at Middletown, his conduct was marked with the strictest propriety, his manners were amiable and affectionate, his attention to his studies was intense and unremitted, and his progress in them rapid and honourable. When he left Middletown, he had acquired a very accurate knowledge of the Latin and Greek languages; and had read not only those classical authors which were necessary for admission into College, but those also which were studied during the two first years of a collegiate life.

In September, 1765, when he had just passed his thirteenth year, he was admitted as a member of Yale College. At that time, unfortunately, the freshman class had no stated tutor; but were dependant for their instruction, sometimes upon one officer of college, and sometimes upon another: a state of things too irregular and unsettled to produce any substantial benefit to the pupil. During the winter, he had the misfortune to break his arm; and, for several months in the spring and summer, he was prevented by sickness from pursuing his studies. Near the close of the Collegiate year, President Clap resigned his office; and the students for a short time were dispersed: a series of calamities, by which the year was in a considerable measure lost to him as a student. The discipline of College had been for several years chiefly annihilated. Loose opinions on morals and religion, prevailed ex-

tensively in the country, and their pernicious influence was too obviously felt in the various seminaries of learning. Owing to the bad state of the College commons, the students had been indulged in the practice of providing entertainments at their rooms. This naturally produced a great degree of inattention to their studies, and gave rise to scenes of revelry and riot, in the highest degree injurious to the pursuits of literature. It is not surprising, that in such a state of things the practice of gambling had become unhappily prevalent in College. Under all these disadvantages, young Dwight gained considerable reputation for genius and acquirements. His information and address rendered his society generally pleasing. It was courted, even by members of the higher classes, who strongly solicited him to join them in their pernicious amusements. But the instructions of his parents had made so deep an impression upon his mind, that no importunities of this nature could prevail upon him to engage with them in gambling. He was at length so far wrought upon, however, as to play for amusement; and, not being necessitated to study his lessons, gradually yielded to their solicitations, until much of his time was wasted in this manner. In no instance, however, did they influence him to play for money, or to stake even a farthing. Yet playing for amusement had so far become a habit, that when he returned to College, upon the commencement of his second year, he entered upon the practice with considerable ardour. From this danger he was fortunately rescued by the exertions of his tutor and kinsman, the Hon. Stephen Mix Mitchell, late Chief Judge of the Supreme Court of Connecticut; to whom, for this and many other acts of kindness, shown him while a member of College, he ever after acknowledged himself to be most deeply indebted. During the sophomore year, he was badly poisoned; by reason of which he was confined at his father's house four months, and obliged to discontinue his studies during that period.

It is apparent, from the foregoing recital, that the two first years of his collegiate life must have been in a great measure lost.

On commencing his junior year, he devoted himself seriously to study. He was now fifteen: had lost a great part of the two preceding years, and had but two remaining, in which he might hope to redeem his loss, and lay the foundation for future usefulness and respectability. He entered on the studies of the year with great zeal, and pursued them with unremitting assiduity and perseverance. At that time College-prayers were attended at half past five o'clock in the morning, in the winter, and at half past four in the summer. He began the year by qualifying himself, every morning, to construe and parse a hundred lines in Homer before prayers. This lesson, which formed no part of the regular College-exercises, was, of course, acquired by candle-light; and his object in attending to it was, to render himself more thoroughly master of the Greek language, than he could expect to become in the com-

mon round of studies pursued by his class. The lesson, as he advanced, was gradually increased to a much larger quantity. His eyes being seriously affected by this intense application, at such unseasonable hours, it is not improbable that the foundation was thus early laid of that weakness in them, which caused him so much distress during the remainder of his life.

In addition to the ordinary pursuits of the year, he devoted a considerable portion of his time to the improvement of his handwriting; and by dint of his own exertions, attained a degree of excellence in penmanship, that has rarely been equalled. So elegant, indeed, was his writing, that it was with difficulty distinguished from the handsomest engravings. We have seen several of the Diplomas which he wrote for his particular friends, and think some of them decidedly more beautiful than the usual copper-plate impression.

This is the earliest period in which he is known to have paid any attention to poetry and music. The date of his first poetical composition cannot be precisely ascertained. Two or three specimens, however, are preserved, which bear the date of 1767, and, of course, were written when he was fifteen years of age. His attachment to music, particularly sacred music, was ardent. His voice was at once melodious and powerful; and his ear exquisitely discriminating. He began a collection of church music in the course of the year, but left it unfinished, probably because it interfered with his more severe and important pursuits.

This may, with propriety, be considered as the era of his excessive devotion to study, and the acquisition of knowledge. At the commencement of the year he formed a resolution, to which he faithfully adhered during the remainder of his collegiate life, to employ fourteen hours each day in close application to his studies. Such intense and unwearied diligence, with the aid of his natural genius, soon established his reputation as a scholar, and placed him among the first of his class. He received the degree of Bachelor of Arts in the year 1769, when he was a little past seventeen years of age. At the Commencement, but a single appointment was made from the class which received the degree of Bachelors. Before giving it out, the President sent for Dwight and Strong,* and informed them that, in the view of the officers of College, they were at the head of the class, and equally deserving of the appointment; but as Strong was the elder of the two, it would be given to him at that time, and to Dwight when the class entered on the degree of Masters.

A short time after leaving College, he was employed to take charge of a grammar-school, at New-Haven. In this situation he continued two years, highly esteemed as an instructer, both by his pupils and their parents. This was the commencement of that

* The late Dr. Strong, of Hartford.

course of life, which, with very little interruption, he pursued for nearly fifty years: a course of life, in which Providence had peculiarly qualified him to excel. Probably few men have lived, who, in the same mode, have rendered more eminent services to mankind.

During these two years, he made great advancement in literature and science. His time was regularly divided, and occupied: six hours in each day in school; eight hours in close and severe study; and the remaining ten hours in exercise and sleep.

In September, 1771, when he was past nineteen, he was chosen a tutor in Yale College. In this situation he remained for six succeeding years, performing its duties with distinguished success and reputation.

When he entered upon the office, more than half the members of his class were older than himself; and the freshman who waited upon him was thirty-two years of age.* Notwithstanding a circumstance generally so disadvantageous, he proceeded in the discharge of his official duties with firmness and assiduity; and, in a short time, gained a reputation for skill in the government and instruction of his class rarely known in the former experience of the College. It ought here to be observed, that the study of the classics and of the mathematics had been for a number of years vigorously pursued, owing to the exertions of several superior men; and the discipline of the seminary raised to a higher standard. His associates were men of distinguished talents; and by their united efforts the institution soon acquired a new and most important character. The study of rhetoric had been, till then, in a great measure neglected. The period from 1771 to 1777, will ever be considered as forming an era in the history of the College. Through the exertions and influence of Howe, Trumbull, and Dwight, a taste for those pursuits was excited, the effects of which have been experienced to the present time. The "art of speaking" had previously been thought scarcely worthy of attention. Of so much importance, however, was it considered by these gentlemen, that they not only taught it to their respective classes, but, from time to time, went upon the College stage to enforce their precepts by their example. Poetry was cultivated by them, especially by Trumbull and Dwight, with all the enthusiasm of genius. It was in the first year of his tutorship, at the age of nineteen, that the subject of this memoir commenced writing the CONQUEST OF CANAAN, a regular epic poem, founded upon the portion of sacred history to which its title refers, and which was finished in the year 1774, when he was twenty-two years of age.

No tutor was ever more faithful in the instruction of his class. His attention to their oratory, has been mentioned. In addition to

* DAVID BUSHNELL, a man of strong mechanical genius, and the inventor of "the Submarine Boat."

the customary mathematical studies, he carried them through spherics and fluxions, and went as far as any of them would accompany him into the Principia of Newton. He also delivered to them a series of lectures on style and composition, on a plan very similar to that contained in the Lectures of Blair, which were not published until a considerable time afterwards. His application to study during the time he remained in office was intense. He began to study so early in the morning as to require candle-light, and continued the employment until late at night.

While a tutor, he was inoculated for the small-pox. The disease affected him mildly; but, upon his recovery, he too soon resumed his former habit of severe application to study. Long before this, his eyes had been greatly weakened, and probably for that reason were more sensibly affected by the small-pox. On being subjected to such rigorous exercise, before they had recovered their natural energy, they were so far injured as to cause him, through life, a great degree of pain and embarrassment.

In the year 1772, he received the degree of Master of Arts. On that occasion he delivered, as an exercise at the public Commencement, "A Dissertation on the History, Eloquence, and Poetry of the Bible." This production, composed and delivered by a youth of twenty, on a subject then so new and of such high interest, was received by the audience with the strongest marks of approbation. A copy was immediately requested for the press; and it was afterwards re-published, both in this country and in Europe. We have seen it mentioned, in several instances, with very high respect, on the other side of the Atlantic. It is now rarely to be met with. Those who have read it, need not be informed, that it was an effort of no common character. It unfolded, at that early age, the bolder features of the author's mind; and evinced uncommon maturity of judgment and taste. The style is dignified and manly, and formed by a standard truly classical. The field of thought was new in this country. The Lectures of Lowth, if then published, were not known on this side of the Atlantic; nor do we know of any work, except the Bible itself, to which the author appears to have been indebted for his plan or his illustrations. The knowledge of criticism displayed in it is profound; the conceptions are bold and original; the images are beautiful and distinct; and the very spirit which breathes in the Sacred Writers, appears to animate his own mind. This was his only effort, in public, which his father ever witnessed.

At a subsequent period, during his residence in College as a tutor, he engaged deeply in the study of the higher branches of the Mathematics. Among the treatises on this science to which his attention was directed, was Newton's Principia, which he studied with the utmost care and attention; and demonstrated, in course, all but two of the propositions, in that profound and elaborate work. This difficult but delightful science, in which the mind is always

guided by *Certainty* in its discovery of truth, so fully engrossed his attention, and his thoughts, that, for a time, he lost even his relish for poetry; and it was not without difficulty that his fondness for it was recovered.

During the second year of his tutorship, he attempted, by restricting his diet, to remove the necessity for bodily exercise, and yet to secure himself from the dulness incident to a full habit and inactive life. He began by lessening the quantity of his food at dinner, and gradually reduced it, until he confined himself to twelve mouthfuls. After a six-month's experiment of this regimen, being still somewhat dissatisfied with its effects, and feeling less clearness of apprehension than was desirable, he confined himself for a considerable period to a vegetable diet, without, however, increasing the quantity. His other meals were proportionally light and abstemious.

After this system of study and diet had been pursued about a twelve-month, his health began insensibly to decline, and his constitution, naturally vigorous, to give way. During the summer of 1774, he first perceived the reality of this change, but had no suspicion of the cause. Though he had suffered several distressing attacks of the bilious colic before the College-Commencement, yet after the vacation he renewed the same course of regimen and of application to study. But a short time had elapsed before these attacks were repeated with increased violence; and his friends becoming seriously apprehensive of the consequences, informed his connexions of his situation. His father, on his arrival at New-Haven, found that his disorder had indeed made dreadful ravages in his constitution. His frame was emaciated, and his strength so far reduced, that it was with extreme difficulty he could be conveyed to Northampton. When he left New-Haven, his friends and his pupils took leave of him, as they supposed, for the last time; and he had himself relinquished all hope of recovery. In the course of two months he had nineteen severe attacks of the disease. An eminent physician, whom he now consulted, after successfully administering to his immediate relief, recommended to him, among other things, a daily course of vigorous bodily exercise, as the only means of restoring his constitution to its primitive vigour. He followed his advice, and, within a twelve-month, walked upwards of two thousand miles, and rode on horseback upwards of three thousand. To his perseverance in this system, he was probably indebted for his recovery, as well as for the uninterrupted health and vigour of constitution which he enjoyed for the ensuing forty years.

In the year 1774, Mr. Dwight united himself to the College church. At this time, it was his expectation to pursue the practice of law; and, towards the close of his residence in College as a tutor, his studies were directed towards that object.

The first class which he instructed entered on the degree of

Bachelors in September, 1775, the year before the declaration of independence. At that time he delivered them a "Valedictory Address," every where sparkling indeed with brilliant imagery, but every where fraught also with strong thoughts and noble conceptions. In two points of view it deserves notice: It unfolds to his pupils the duty of fixing on a very high standard of character as intelligent and as moral beings, in a manner which proves at once that this was literally the rule which governed his own conduct, and that he was admirably qualified to influence others to adopt it; it also communicates to them views of the growth and ultimate importance of this country, which were at once new, noble, and prophetic.

In March, 1777, he was married to Miss Mary Woolsey, the daughter of Benjamin Woolsey, Esquire, of Long-Island, the class-mate, room-mate, and intimate friend of his father. They had eight sons, of whom six survive their father. Mrs. Dwight is still living.

In May of the same year, College was broken up. The students left New-Haven at the commencement of the vacation, and pursued their studies during the summer under their respective tutors, in places less exposed to the sudden incursions of the enemy. Mr. Dwight retired with his class to Weathersfield, and remained with them till September. Early in June he was licensed as a preacher, by a committee of the Northern Association, in his native county of Hampshire, in the state of Massachusetts. Beside instructing his class during the summer, he preached on the Sabbath at Kensington, a parish in Weathersfield.

The following fact is a striking proof of the respect and affection with which he was regarded by the students. It being well ascertained that the existing head of the College would relinquish his connexion with it, the students, as a body, drew up and signed a petition to the Corporation, that he might be elected to the Presidency. It was owing to his own interference, that the application was not formally made.

He left College early in September, and soon after was appointed Chaplain to General Parsons' brigade, which was a part of the division of General Putnam, in the army of the United States. In the British army and navy, this office is too often filled by men who are distinguished only for their ignorance and profligacy. We are also compelled to admit, that, during our late war, this was most extensively true of those who held the same stations among our own forces. But in our war of the revolution the very contrary was the fact. The generous enthusiasm which then pervaded the country, not only prompted our young men of honour in civil life to take the field, but induced many of our clergy, of the first reputation for piety and talents, to attach themselves to the staff. The soldier of the revolution need not be told how animating were their sermons and their prayers, nor how correct and exemplary were their lives.

Mr. Dwight joined the army at West Point in October, 1777. Although the scene was entirely new to him, he was not idle nor inattentive to the business which now devolved upon him. He performed the appropriate duties of his office with strict punctuality, and with uncommon reputation. The troops who composed the brigade were, principally, Connecticut farmers; men who had been soberly educated, and who were willing to listen to the truths of the Gospel, even in a camp. On the Sabbath, they heard him with profound attention. During the week, they beheld him exerting himself, as far as lay in his power, to instruct them in morals and religion. Several of his discourses delivered to the whole army, owing partly to their intrinsic merit, and partly to the feelings of the times, gained him high reputation with the American public. He also wrote several patriotic songs, which were universally popular. They were favourite songs with the soldiers, and contributed not a little to kindle their enthusiasm in the cause of freedom. One of them, his "Columbia," will not soon be forgotten: it opened the eyes of his countrymen on a prospect new, brilliant, and delightful; and exhibited in distinct vision the rising glories of our infant empire. His connexion with the army enabled him to form an extensive acquaintance with many officers of distinction; and among them he had the satisfaction to rank the commander in chief. That great man honoured him with flattering attentions. Mr. Dwight ever remembered his kindness with lively gratitude, and entertained for his character and services, military and civil, the highest respect and veneration.

He remained in the army a little more than a year, when the news of his father's death, which reached him near the close of October, 1778, rendered it necessary for him to resign his office, in order to console his mother under that severe affliction, and to assist her in the support and education of her numerous family. On leaving the army, he received from his brother officers, particularly from Generals Putnam and Parsons, as well as from the soldiers of the brigade, the most grateful testimonies of respect and kindness.

His father, in the midst of health and usefulness, had gone in the summer of 1776 to the Mississippi, for the purpose of providing a settlement in that country for two of his sons, by whom he was accompanied. Himself, with his brother-in-law, General Lyman, had grants from the crown of a large tract of land, in the southwest angle of what is now the state of Mississippi, comprising the present township of Natchez, and a considerable extent of adjacent country. Here he commenced a settlement under prosperous circumstances; but, near the close of the following year, fell a victim to the disease of the climate. He died at Natchez. His two sons, in company with the other adventurers, crossed the country through the wilderness in the dead of winter; and, after innumerable dangers and hardships, reached the sea-coast

of Georgia in safety. An account of this expedition will be found in the Travels of President Dwight. Rarely have we met with a more interesting or melancholy story. The original papers containing the grant were unhappily lost; and the family have never been able to substantiate their title to the land. Mr. Dwight's personal grant was a considerable part of the township of Natchez. He left a widow and thirteen children, ten of whom were under twenty-one years of age. The subject of this memoir was the eldest, and on him devolved the care of the family, at a period when the situation and circumstances of the country rendered the task peculiarly difficult and laborious. From the time of his entering on the Bachelor's degree at College, to his leaving the army, he had subjected his father to no expense for his own support. The intelligence of his death, in consequence of the peculiar circumstances of the country, did not reach the family until near a twelve-month after the event had happened. Upon receiving the information, he, with as little delay as possible, removed his own family to Northampton, and undertook the performance of the new duties which providentially had devolved upon him, with the greatest promptitude and cheerfulness. In this situation he passed five years of the most interesting period of his life; performing in an exemplary manner the offices of a son and a brother, and of a guardian to the younger children. Here, he was emphatically the staff and stay of the family. The government and education of the children, as well as the daily provisions for their wants, depended almost exclusively on his exertions. The elder as well as the younger were committed to his care, and loved and obeyed him as their father. The filial affection and dutiful respect and obedience which he exhibited towards his mother, and the more than fraternal kindness with which he watched over the well-being of his brothers and sisters, deserve the most honourable remembrance. To accomplish this object, he postponed his own establishment for life, and a provision for his family. To accomplish it, though destitute of property, he relinquished in their favour his own proportion of the family estate; laboured constantly for five years with a diligence and alacrity rarely exampled; and continued his paternal care and exertions and liberality long after his removal from Northampton. Often have we heard his mother, who died only ten years since, acknowledge, in language of eloquent affection and gratitude, his kindness and faithfulness, and honourable generosity to her and to her children. The respect which she felt and manifested towards him, though perhaps not his inferior in native powers of mind, resembled the affection of a dutiful child towards her father, rather than the feelings of a mother for her son. During this period, he laboured through the week upon the farm, and preached on the Sabbath to different vacant congregations in the neighbouring towns. He also established a school at Northampton, for the instruction of youth of

both sexes, which was almost immediately resorted to by such a number of pupils, that he was under the necessity of employing two assistants. At the same time, owing to the dispersed condition of the College at New-Haven, and to his established character as an instructer, a part of one of the classes in that seminary repaired to Northampton, and placed themselves under his care as their preceptor. To them he devoted his own immediate attention, until they had completed their regular course of collegiate studies. The school was continued during his residence there, and uniformly maintained an extensive and distinguished reputation. At the same time, he preached almost without intermission upon the Sabbath, with increasing popularity. For about one year, commencing with the winter of 1778—1779, he supplied the vacant congregation of Westfield; the year following, that of Muddy-Brook, a parish of Deerfield; and the year after, that of South Hadley. He often mentioned it to the honour of the people of Muddy-Brook, that they paid him for preaching, not in the depreciated currency of the country, but in specie, or wheat at the specie price, at his election. The compensation which he received for preaching, as well as the profits of his school, were all expended in the support of the common family.

A strong disposition was manifested, from time to time, by the inhabitants of Northampton, to employ him in civil life. In the county conventions of Hampshire he repeatedly represented the town; and, in connexion with a few individuals, met and resisted that spirit of disorganization and licentiousness which was then unhappily prevalent in many parts of the county, and which had too visible an influence in an assembly often fluctuating and tumultuous. It was owing eminently to his exertions, and those of his colleague, the Hon. Joseph Hawley, in opposition to the current of popular feeling, and to no small weight of talents and influence, that the new constitution of Massachusetts was adopted by the convention of the most important county in the state. Twice he consented to serve the town as their representative in the state legislature. This was in the years 1781 and 1782, just before the close of the war of independence; when subjects of an interesting and perplexing nature, growing out of the great controversy in which the country had so long been engaged, extensively agitated the public mind, and engrossed legislative attention. Every thing was then, in a sense, unsettled. That war had sundered not only the cords which fastened the colonies to the mother country, but those, also, which bound them to each other. The old foundations were, in a sense, destroyed; and new ones were to be established. Many of the old laws and regulations were to be altered; and others, accommodated to the state of freedom and independence, were to be devised and instituted. A sense of subordination and obedience to law, was, also, to be cherished, instead of a spirit of licentiousness then widely prevalent. In this

situation, inexperienced as he was in the business of a politician, or a legislator, he at once became one of the most industrious and influential members of that body, and was greatly admired and distinguished for his talents and eloquence. All his exertions were on the side of good order and good morals; and indicated a steady attachment to the principles of rational liberty, and decided hostility to licentiousness. On one occasion he was enabled to prove his devotion to the interests of learning. A petition for a grant in favour of Harvard College was before the legislature. At that time such grants were unpopular. That spirit of honourable liberality, which now happily characterizes the legislature and people of that commonwealth, was then far from being universally operative. During his occasional absence from the house, the petition had been called up; and, after finding but few, and those not very warm advocates, had been generally negatived. On taking his seat, Mr. Dwight, learning what had occurred, moved a reconsideration of the vote. In a speech of about one hour in length, fraught with wit, with argument, and with eloquence, and received with marked applause on the spot, from the members and the spectators, he effectually changed the feelings of the house, and procured nearly a unanimous vote in favour of the grant. It gave him high pleasure thus to confer an obligation on that respectable seminary: an obligation which was gratefully acknowledged by its principal officers, as well as by many others of its friends.

At this period, he was earnestly solicited by his friends to quit the profession in which he had engaged, and devote himself to public life. In the winter of 1782—1783, a committee from the delegation of Hampshire, waited upon him with assurances from that delegation, that, if he would consent, their influence should be exerted to secure his election to the continental Congress: a place in the gift of the legislature. The late Governor Phillips, of Andover, who was his friend and fellow-lodger, though a man of distinguished piety, gave it as his own unqualified opinion, that he ought to listen to these proposals and remain in civil life; assuring him, also, with several of the most influential members of both houses, of their cordial support. But he had become so thoroughly weaned from his first intention of practising law, and was so much attached to the clerical profession, and so convinced of its superior usefulness, that nothing could change his resolution to devote his life to the latter. Having preached occasionally while attending the legislature, in Boston, and the neighbourhood, he received invitations, accompanied with flattering offers, as it regarded compensation, to settle as a minister, in Beverly and Charlestown; both of which, however, he declined. In the month of May, 1783, he was invited, by an unanimous vote of the church and congregation of Greenfield, a parish in the town of Fairfield, in Connecticut, to settle as their minister. This invitation he accepted, on the 20th of July, in the same year. On the 5th of November follow-

ing, he was regularly ordained over that people; and for the succeeding twelve years remained their pastor.

The annual compensation which he received at Greenfield was a salary of five hundred dollars, the use of six acres of parochial land, and twenty cords of wood. They also gave him a settlement of one thousand dollars. From his extensive acquaintance with men of consideration in literature and politics throughout the country, and a native propensity to hospitality, it was very apparent that he could not expect to support a growing family, and the expenses incident to his standing in the community, upon such an income. To supply the deficiency, he immediately established an academy at Greenfield, which he superintended himself; devoting six hours regularly every day to the instruction of his pupils. In a short time, youths in great numbers, and of both sexes, not only from various parts of New-England, but from the middle and southern states, as well as from abroad, resorted to his school. This institution was commenced and carried on absolutely without funds, and depended solely on his own character and exertions. He supported it during the whole period of his residence there with unexampled reputation. We know of no similar institution in this country, thus dependant, which has flourished so long, or to such a degree. During the twelve years of his residence there, he instructed upwards of one thousand pupils. Numbers of them were carried through the whole course of education customary at College. In his school he adopted, to a considerable degree, one part of the Lancasterian mode of instruction; making it extensively the duty of the older scholars, who were competent, to hear the recitations of the younger. Many of his pupils were regularly boarded in his family; so that its usual collective number was from twenty to twenty-five. It ought to be mentioned that his female pupils were instructed in many of the higher branches of literature, which had not, here, previously been taught to their sex; and that under his auspices, on the delightful spot where he resided, began that superior system of female education which is founded on the principle, that women are intelligent beings, capable of mental improvement, and which is at present extensively prevalent. Even to this day, however, in very few of the higher female schools, are they carried through the same extensive and solid course of study which was pursued by his pupils. Probably to the exertions and influence of no one individual are the ladies of our country so extensively indebted. No man thought more highly of the sex; no man loved better the company of women of refinement and intelligence; and no man did more to exalt the female character.

Beside the instruction of his school, he preached steadily twice every Sabbath; and regularly visited his people. He also cultivated, with his own hands, a large kitchen, fruit, and flower garden. Living but a few rods from the public road, in a most delightful

village, and having numerous family connexions, and very many friends and acquaintance, he saw and entertained an almost uninterrupted succession of company; greater, we are led to believe, than any individual whom we have known in the state. Among these were many strangers of respectability, from various and distant parts of the country. Greenfield was the resort of learning, of talents, of refinement, and of piety; and his own hospitable doors were ever open to welcome the stranger as well as the friend. We believe the instances to be rare, in which a single individual has been the centre of such extensive attraction to men of superior character, or so entirely altered the aspect of society in the region around him.

When it is considered that, from his leaving College as a tutor, his eyes were so weak as not only to preclude him almost entirely from reading and writing, but to cause him, very frequently, extreme pain and distress; it will naturally be concluded, that he must have passed a very industrious and laborious life. Such, however, was his capacity for every kind of business in which he was engaged, that he was able to devote as much time as was necessary to the calls of company and friendship, as well as to perform the extra-parochial duties of a minister to his people. Previous to his settlement at Greenfield, his character as a preacher stood high in the public estimation. During the period of his residence there, he gained a reputation not often equalled in this country.

Having experienced the disadvantages of too abstemious as well as too sedentary a life when engaged as tutor in College, he became ever afterwards extremely attentive to his health. For the purpose of guarding himself against the recurrence of his former sufferings in this respect, he used a great deal of bodily exercise. He not only walked and rode, but he worked steadily and vigorously in his garden and on his land.

Being unable from the weakness of his eyes to write, he very early discovered that he must perform his stated duties as a preacher without notes, or abandon his profession. A very few experiments convinced him that he was able to adopt the former course; and he pursued it for many years almost exclusively. That course was, to write the heads of his discourse, and the leading thoughts of which it was to be composed, and to fill up the body of it at the time of delivery. What was committed to writing occupied him but a few minutes. Under all the disadvantages which he experienced from the weakness of his eyes, and notwithstanding the variety of his avocations and duties, he composed and preached, while at Greenfield, about one thousand sermons, which, deducting the time he was absent during that period, will differ very little from two each week.

In the year 1785, he published the Conquest of Canaan. This work was begun, as has been remarked, when he was nineteen years

of age, and finished in his twenty-third year. Proposals for printing it were issued in 1775, and upwards of three thousand subscribers procured; but the circumstances of the country, just then commencing the war of independence, which lasted till 1783, postponed its publication. A few additions were made to the poem between that time and its appearance in 1785; but the great body of it was published as it was written in 1773.

In 1787, Mr. Dwight received the degree of *Doctor of Divinity* from the College at Princeton, New-Jersey. He was then thirty-five years of age.

In 1791, he was appointed by the governor of the state to preach the election sermon, before the legislature, at Hartford.

In the year 1793, he published a sermon on the Genuineness and Authenticity of the New Testament; and in the following year, a poem in seven parts, called after the place of his residence, "Greenfield Hill." The Conquest of Canaan, and Greenfield Hill, were both re-published in England.

During his residence at Greenfield, he cultivated an extensive acquaintance and intercourse, not only with the Congregational Clergy of New-England, but with many in the Presbyterian Church in New-York and the states farther south. This fact often enabled him to exert an auspicious influence in removing the prejudices which unhappily existed in many of both classes; as well as in various instances directly to promote the great interests of morals and religion. Among other subjects which early engaged his attention, was that of a more intimate union of the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches throughout the United States. On this subject he entered into an extensive correspondence with the more influential clergy, both in Connecticut and New-York. A proposition for this object was made by him, early in the year 1790, in the particular Association of which he was a member. It was carried from that body to the General Association of Connecticut, which, in June of that year, met at his house. That venerable body proposed it in form to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church and the General Convention of Massachusetts. The two former bodies appointed each a committee of three to form and establish articles of union. This committee, of whom Dr. Dwight was one, met at New-Haven in September, 1791, and most harmoniously and happily executed their commission. To the union then agreed on, the associated churches of Massachusetts, New-Hampshire, and Vermont, have since acceded: an event that has been attended with very beneficial consequences to religion and the Church.

In the year 1794, he was invited by the Consistory of the Reformed Dutch Church in the city of Albany, to remove to that place and settle as their minister. The application was unanimous, and the compensation which they offered was considered, at the time, as liberal; but it was not accepted, for reasons which were deemed by him satisfactory.

In May, 1795, the Presidency of Yale College became vacant by the death of the Rev. Dr. Stiles. In fixing on a successor, it may with propriety be said, that towards Dr. Dwight the attention of the community was universally directed. The high reputation as an instructer, which he had gained whilst a tutor, and which he had maintained and enlarged since he left the College, was so universally known and acknowledged, that there was no difficulty in determining the question which now devolved upon the Corporation. They had nothing to do but to pursue the course pointed out by public opinion, which, in this case, was clearly and distinctly marked. Accordingly, he was, with great unanimity, appointed to fill that important and respectable station; was inaugurated in September of that year, and presided at the public Commencement; and, in December following, removed his family to New-Haven. The people of his parish with whom he had lived for twelve years in uninterrupted harmony, heard of his appointment with extreme regret. They loved their pastor, and they were proud of him, and they could not consent to give him up. Never have we known a parish part with their minister with more reluctance.

We are now entering upon a very interesting period in the life of Dr. Dwight. Owing to a variety of causes which it is not necessary to enumerate, the state of Yale College at the time of his accession to the office of President, was in many respects unhappy. Destitute in a great degree of public or private patronage, its numbers were reduced, its discipline was relaxed, a looseness of moral and religious sentiment had become fashionable, and its reputation had been for some time on the decline through the community. One of the greatest evils under which it suffered, was an extensive prevalence of infidelity among the students. This pernicious spirit had been derived from the circumstances of the country at the close of the preceding war. As was natural, it found easy access to the minds of a collection of youths, who were fascinated with ideas of mental as well as political independence, and who were easily induced to shake off what they considered the shackles of habit and superstition. The degree to which it prevailed may be conjectured from the following fact. A considerable proportion of the class which he first taught, had assumed the names of the principal English and French infidels, and were more familiarly known by them than by their own. Under circumstances like these, he entered upon the duties of his office as PRESIDENT OF YALE COLLEGE.

The talents which he possessed for the instruction and government of youth were now called into full exercise. A thorough reformation in the system of discipline was early commenced, and accomplished with as much expedition as the nature of the case would admit. Infidelity was assailed by argument, and vanquished, and vice was disgraced, and in a great measure banished from the College.

He took upon himself the instruction of the senior class, pursuing a system which produced the most beneficial effects. "The public (says Professor Silliman) have been little aware of the extent and diversity of the labours of President Dwight, in this Institution. He has, in fact, discharged the duties of four offices, either of which is, ordinarily, considered as sufficient to engross the time and talents of one man. He has been charged with the general superintendence and responsibility constituting the appropriate duties of the presidency; like his predecessors, he instructed the senior class in their peculiar studies, but on a much more enlarged plan; he voluntarily discharged, to a great extent, the duties of a professor of Belles-Lettres and Oratory; and he has been charged also with those of a professor of Theology."*

His mode of instructing was peculiarly his own. His long experience in this employment, had made him thoroughly acquainted with the youthful character, and enabled him to teach as well as to govern young men, with extraordinary success. "The students (says Professor Silliman) habitually expected the senior year with much interest, as one in which they looked for the most valuable instructions; nor were they disappointed. President Dwight delighted much in the peculiar studies which it was his duty to elucidate. Although these studies were prosecuted by the students in appropriate text-books, the order of which he observed in his recitations, he always thought for himself with much independence, but with a respectful deference to the opinions of men of eminence. Still the opinions of the authors in question he sometimes found reason to controvert, and while he candidly stated his own views, with the grounds of them, he enjoined upon his pupils the same independence of mind, and was willing that they too should differ from him, and think for themselves. The recitations of the senior class were, in fact, although not in name, a series of familiar lectures; and the driest parts of logic and metaphysics were rendered interesting by the ample illustrations of the President, enlivened by agreeable and apposite anecdote, and by sallies of sprightliness, which, while they took nothing from his dignity, greatly relieved the tedium of long discussions.

"Into his recitations and discussions he also threw a vast fund of practical instruction, on almost every subject of life, manners, and human business; for few men have ever observed more carefully and extensively; few have conversed more largely, and been more in contact with the world, in all its innocently accessible points.

"His object was not only to instruct the young men under his care in the particular sciences which came before them, but to fit them, by repeated counsels, and by information pressed upon them with parental solicitude, for the various scenes into which they were to pass in life.

* Address, p. 15.

"In discussing the various subjects which customarily came before the senior class, especially those connected with the decision of disputed questions, it was usual for the President to assume a considerable range of statement and argument; and all those who have had the happiness to attend on his instructions, will remember, that not on a few occasions, his mind was kindled with his subject; till, excited by the re-acting stimulus of his own thoughts and communications, he has spoken even more eloquently, and with a more finished touch of feeling, than was usual in his regular written discourses.

"It was never any part of his plan merely to discharge his duty: he did it with his whole mind and heart; and thought nothing adequately done, till all was done that the case admitted of. Till the increase of professorships rendered it unnecessary, he heard the senior class recite twice as often as had been customary, and on most occasions his recitations were of double the length that would have been required."

In the year 1795, when President Dwight entered upon the duties of his office in the College, the whole number of students was one hundred and ten. Almost immediately after his accession, they began to increase, and in the course of his presidency amounted to three hundred and thirteen; an increase unexampled in any similar institution in this country.

It has been remarked, that at the time of his accession to the presidency, infidelity was fashionable and prevalent in the College. To extirpate a spirit so pernicious and fatal, he availed himself of an early and decisive opportunity. Forensic disputation was an important exercise of the senior class. For this purpose they were formed into a convenient number of divisions; two of which disputed before him every week, in the presence of the other members of the class, and of the resident graduates. It was the practice for each division to agree upon several questions, and then refer them to the President to select which he thought proper. At that time infidelity was extensively prevalent in the state, and in the country; and an impression existed generally among the students, that Christianity was supported by authority, and not by argument; and that their instructers were afraid to investigate the question respecting the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures, in the field of open and fair discussion. One of the questions presented by the first division was this: "*Are the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament the Word of God?*" To their surprise the President selected it for discussion; told them to write on which side they pleased, as he should not impute to them any sentiments which they advanced as their own; and requested those who should write on the negative side of the question to collect and bring forward all the facts and arguments which they could produce: enjoining it upon them, however, to treat the subject with becoming respect and reverence. Most if not all the members of the division came forward

as the champions of Infidelity. When they had finished the discussion, he first examined the ground they had taken; triumphantly refuted their arguments; proved to them that their statement of facts was mistaken or irrelevant; and, to their astonishment, convinced them that their acquaintance with the subject was wholly superficial. After this, he entered into a direct defence of the divine origin of Christianity, in a strain of powerful argument and animated eloquence which nothing could resist. The effect upon the students was electrical. From that moment Infidelity was not only without a strong hold, but without a lurking place. To espouse her cause was now as unpopular as before it had been to profess a belief in Christianity. Unable to endure the exposure of argument, she fled from the retreats of learning, ashamed and disgraced.

His system of discipline was peculiarly his own; and has from its success commanded entire and universal approbation. The College laws, in force when he entered on the Presidency, were the same which were generally in being before his admission to College as a student. They were compiled by President Clap from the statutes of the English Universities; were made for other times, and for a very different state of society. Without proposing in the outset any serious alterations in the written code of laws, he effectually changed the whole system of administration. The government of College became as really new, as if every statute had been altered. A single clause at the end of the chapter on "Crimes and Misdemeanors," furnished him and his companions with authority to introduce and to justify this change, and became, in a sense, the only written law in force. The purport of this clause was, that, as the laws of the College were few and general, the Faculty might proceed, in all cases not expressly provided for, *according to their best discretion.* The intercourse between the officers and the students was placed on a new footing: the latter were addressed and treated as young gentlemen, and no other marks of respect were demanded of them, than those which gentlemen of course render to each other. The distinctions between the classes, so far as they were unnecessary and odious, were prevented. That degrading servility to which, under the authority of long established usage, the freshman class had been subjected, was abolished. The practice of inflicting fines for infractions of the laws, was abrogated; and it is not known that resort was ever had to that species of punishment for absence from prayers or recitation, or for any other offence of a character not more heinous. Instead of pursuing a course which seemed only calculated to inflict a penalty on the parent, he wished to adopt one which should prevent the necessity of every kind of penalty, by preventing offences. In the room of pecuniary exactions for neglect of study, and other violations of duty, he substituted private remonstrance. Appeals were made to the conscience of the delinquent, as well as

to his hopes and fears: appeals founded on the guilt of his conduct, on his love of reputation, the happiness of his parents, and his prospects in life. These appeals were almost always successful. When they failed, early notice of this fact was given to the parent. If their united remonstrances were unavailing, the offender was privately informed that his connexion with College had ceased. This course was principally pursued during the freshman year; at the close of which, the class was regularly relieved of those who had manifested a settled disposition to be idle and vicious. It was his sincere endeavour to save the character of the young offender. If an offence was private, its punishment, if possible, was private; and this, whether the delinquent was permitted to remain a member of College or not. Many of his pupils can remember how kindly and honourably he conducted towards them when he had discovered their misconduct.

The system of *matriculation*, which he introduced, has proved highly efficacious and salutary. According to this system, those who are found, upon examination, to possess the requisite literary attainments, do not at once become members of College. To be members in full standing, their names must be entered in the "*Matriculation Book*;" and this cannot be done until they have established a fair character for correct moral deportment and application to study. Before this takes place, they are liable to be sent home at any moment. An important favour, also, was conferred on parents living at a distance, by requiring their children to have guardians to regulate their expenses.

He encouraged the students, especially those of the senior class, in all their difficulties and troubles, to come to him for advice and assistance. In every such case, the instructer was forgotten in the friend and father. He entered into their interests and feelings, just as if they were his own; and while he yielded the necessary relief, he endeared himself to them permanently by his kindness. The members of the senior class, who wished to engage for a season, after leaving College, in the business of instruction, applied to him regularly to procure them eligible situations. So lively was the interest which he took in their welfare, and so willing and active his exertions in their behalf, that few such applications failed of being successful. He remembered the feelings of a young man just leaving College, without a profession, without property, and with no means of support but the blessing of God and his own exertions. Nothing gave him higher pleasure than to encourage the heart of every youth so situated, to save him from despondence, and to open to him the road to property, to usefulness, and to honour. The number of his students whom he thus essentially befriended, if stated, would almost exceed belief. With others, who were in more affluent circumstances, he would enter into a free and confidential conversation on their plan of life, explain to them their peculiar dangers, and lead them to aim at eminence in their profes-

sions, and to form for themselves a high standard of moral excellence. The respect and affection manifested towards him by his pupils, (after leaving College) whenever they visited New-Haven, as well as when they met him abroad, was a sufficient reward for all his efforts to serve them, if he had not found a still higher reward in doing good. We will only add, that his pupils familiarly spoke of him, with reference to this subject, by the most honourable appellation, "THE YOUNG MAN'S FRIEND."

There can be no higher evidence of his qualifications for the important place which he filled, than is furnished by the effects of his presidency. Yale College was founded by a number of pious clergymen without property, who had little to bestow upon it but a few books on theology. It has always struggled forward through great difficulties and embarrassments for the want of those funds which are indispensably necessary to its highest prosperity. Those at a distance, who know nothing of the Institution but its extensive reputation, would indeed be astonished were they told how small is the amount of benefactions which it has received. The men of wealth, in the state where it is situated, have not sufficiently realized its importance to bestow upon it their bounty. The state, also, though at times she has assisted it, has not yet rivalled the munificence of her neighbours on the North and West towards their seminaries of learning. In her public funds, she is, in proportion to her population, the richest state in the Union; yet the College, emphatically her ornament and her glory, has but too sparingly enjoyed her patronage. We have already seen its situation, when Dr. Dwight was inducted into the presidency. Under all these disadvantages, in his hands, and by his unwearied assiduity and exertions, and those of his companions in office, it assumed a new appearance. Its numbers increased, its discipline was revived and invigorated, its morals were purified, and its relative character greatly elevated.

The period during which he presided over the College was attended with peculiar difficulties. A general sentiment of insubordination, growing out of the political situation of the civilized world, had seized the minds of the young as well as the old. High notions of freedom and personal independence prevailed among all ages. And the first impulse, to which in many instances the minds of youths as well as of men were disposed to yield, was *resistance to authority*. Many of our higher seminaries of learning have witnessed its effects in scenes of riot and insurrection, which have, for the time, subverted their authority, and destroyed their usefulness. Yale College wholly escaped these evils. No general combination of the students to resist its government, ever occurred during his presidency. This fact is to be ascribed to the wisdom and firmness of the President and his associates in office. He well knew that the tranquillity of such an institution must depend on the respect and affection of the students, and the steady watchfulness

of its officers. Deeply read in the human character, and emphatically so in the character of young men, he foresaw the approaches of the storm which so extensively prevailed, and provided in season the means of defence and security. On every occasion of this kind, he derived the utmost benefit from one trait of his character, his *energy;* a trait which no man ever possessed in a more eminent degree. His decision and inflexibility to his purpose cannot be surpassed.

At the commencement of his presidency, the professorship of theology was vacant. The Corporation proposed to appoint him, in form, to the office. For the first ten years, he would consent to none but an annual appointment. In 1805, it was made permanent. During the whole period, he preached twice every Sabbath, with almost no assistance from his brethren, and very rarely having an opportunity to exchange with the neighbouring clergy. Early in the year following his induction, he commenced the delivery of a series of lectures on the Evidences of Divine Revelation. This was no part of the duties of either office; but, owing to the extensive prevalence of infidelity in the country at that period, he viewed it as necessary to guard his pupils against the contagion. These lectures were not written out; the weak state of his eyes forbad his employing them for such a purpose. After collecting materials for about fifty, the same difficulty compelled him to desist, and prevented him from delivering even the whole of that number. They were on a plan entirely new, and were listened to with great interest. Had not the battle with Infidelity been fought, and the victory won, we should regret, still more than we now do, that they were left unfinished. No one, not personally acquainted with the facts, can realize how great, at this period, were his sufferings from weakness of sight. For years it was with extreme difficulty that he could read or write even a sentence. He was greatly alarmed, for a long period, with the symptoms of an approaching *gutta serena.* Repeatedly the pressure on the brain was so great as to produce momentary blindness, and obviously to threaten apoplexy. Occasionally, for weeks together, the anguish of his eyes was so intense that it required powerful exertion to draw off his mind to any other object. And often, after attempting in vain to sleep, he has risen from his bed, and, to promote a free perspiration, has walked for miles in the middle of the night.

In the prosecution of his duties as professor of divinity, he early began to deliver the lectures in these volumes. His practice was to preach one on the morning of each Sabbath in term time. By this arrangement he finished the course once in four years. Thus each student, who completed his regular collegiate period, had an opportunity to hear the whole series. He first conceived the plan of the work at Greenfield. While there, he completed it in short notes in about one hundred sermons, and delivered them twice to his people before his removal. At New-Haven, he twice went

through with them in the same state; frequently, however, adding to their number, and altering their arrangement.

In 1805, when he was permanently appointed Professor of Theology, the Corporation allowed him fifty pounds per annum to employ an amanuensis. Though the compensation was trifling, yet the place was coveted, and regularly applied for, a length of time before it became vacant. He began immediately to write out these Lectures; and wrote one a week during term time, or forty a year until they were completed. If not prevented, he commenced this task on Monday morning. His progress depended, with the exception of casual interruptions, on the rapidity of the amanuensis; which always fell short of the rapidity with which he dictated. Sometimes, though rarely, the sermon was finished in a single day; usually in the course of the second day. The remainder of the week was employed in writing his Travels, and Occasional Sermons. When interrupted by company, if propriety did not forbid, he would proceed with two trains of thought by the hour together; conversing with the company, and also dictating to the amanuensis.

By a standing rule of the College, the President annually delivers a valedictory sermon, on the Sabbath preceding the Commencement, to the candidates for the Bachelor's degree. Perhaps no part of his clerical labours excited more public attention, or were listened to with a livelier interest, than the sermons delivered on these occasions.

In the year 1797, he was applied to by the General Association of Connecticut to revise Dr. Watts' version of the Psalms; to versify such as he had omitted; and to make a selection of Hymns suited to the general purposes of public worship. The work was completed in 1800, and laid before a joint committee of that body and of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church; by whom it was approved, and recommended to the use of the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches throughout the United States. In the performance of this difficult task, he made alterations, of more or less consequence, in a considerable number of Dr. Watts' Psalms; and composed thirty-three entire psalms, containing about twelve hundred and fifty lines.

From the time he recovered his health, after the severe attack of colic already mentioned, he habituated himself to a steady course of vigorous bodily exercise. While at Greenfield, notwithstanding the multitude of his avocations, he walked, and rode on horseback, extensively; and constantly cultivated a large fruit and kitchen garden with his own hands. For this particular species of labour he had a high relish. His garden was distinguished for its beauty and its productiveness: for the excellence of its vegetables, the abundance and delicacy of its fruits, and the choice variety of its flowers. Nor did the habit cease with him after his removal to New-Haven. He there pursued the same course—making it his constant practice, through the whole season for gardening, to work

at least an hour every morning before breakfast. In other parts of the year, he walked much and daily; rode frequently; and often in the winter, when no other mode of exercise was convenient, he would cut his firewood. On this subject he exhibited the strictest uniformity and perseverance; and both by precept and example inculcated upon his pupils the necessity of a similar course. With reference, in a considerable degree, to the same object, in the year 1796, he commenced journeying on horseback, or in a sulky, during the College vacations, particularly in May and September. This practice he continued through the remainder of his life, except the last year; when he was severely attacked by the disease by which it was terminated. In these various journeys, it is computed that he rode about twenty thousand miles. His excursions were chiefly confined to the New-England states, and the state of New-York. He experienced the highest gratification from the beauties of scenery; and scarcely a spot can be named within those limits, where those beauties are to be found in high perfection, which he did not visit and describe. For his own amusement, he took notes of the most material occurrences of his several journeys; and afterwards wrote them out, for the gratification of his family. This suggested to him the idea of collecting materials, from time to time, for one or more volumes of travels; in which should be comprised, not only an account of the climate, soil, mountains, rivers, scenery, curiosities, and general face of the country over which he passed, but of the state of society, of manners, morals, literature, and religion; the institutions, civil, literary, and religious; and the character of the governments and laws, of the abovementioned states. To the performance of this task he was greatly prompted by the very unfair and illiberal accounts, which are given of us by foreigners, who have done little else than caricature both the country and its inhabitants. In his opinion, also, there was something peculiar in the circumstances of this country, which would render its history interesting to the philosopher, the statesman, and the Christian. These circumstances arose from the singular character and romantic history of the aborigines; from the recent date of its settlement by civilized inhabitants; from the character, views, and history, of its first settlers; from the advancements it had made in wealth, science, the arts; the character of its government, laws, and institutions; and, in short, from its progress in all the great objects of a civilized and Christian community, in the course of a hundred and eighty years.

On these journeys he visited great numbers of the most intelligent and respectable inhabitants of those tracts of country over which he travelled; and derived, from his conversation with them, a great collection of facts relative to the general state of morals, manners, and religion. The information thus gained was arranged, reduced to writing, and prepared for publication: the whole forming materials for three octavo volumes. It is believed, by those

who have had an opportunity to examine the manuscripts, that no work has appeared which contains so much correct information concerning the subjects of which it treats, as this. It is also believed that, should it ever be published, it will have the effect of redeeming our national character from the abuse and calumnies which have been heaped upon it by foreign travellers.

These journeys also enabled him to form an acquaintance with great numbers of the clergy, and many other persons of a religious character, in the states through which he travelled; and to ascertain the moral and religious condition of the people. This information was of the highest moment to him, both as it respected his feelings and his pursuits. By these means, and by his extensive correspondence, he became possessed of more knowledge, general and local, of the religious state and interests of the country, than almost any other man; and, by the aid of this knowledge, he was able to originate, and still oftener to aid, the execution of very numerous and extensive schemes of charity and benevolence.

To enumerate the various literary, charitable, and pious institutions, which he was active in founding, or promoting, would be a laborious employment. Some of the principal ones may be mentioned. By his exertions and influence, aided by those of distinguished men around him, "The Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences" was established. This was done in the year 1799; and the association was incorporated by the legislature of that state in October of the same year. One of the great objects in view was, to procure a Statistical Account of Connecticut. This he had much at heart, and flattered himself he should be able to accomplish. For this purpose, the Academy printed and distributed a list of inquiries to men of intelligence, throughout the state, and to encourage and stimulate others to assist in the execution of the plan. Notwithstanding the weakness of his eyes, he wrote the account of New-Haven at an early date, which the Academy afterwards published. Accounts of a few other towns were furnished by other gentlemen. But, as it proved less easy than he imagined, to obtain the performance of a task attended with some labour and no profit, the business languished in hands far less occupied than his own, and the principal object was never accomplished.

He was a zealous promoter of the establishment, and the exertions, of the Missionary Society of Connecticut; an institution pre-eminent in this country for its zeal and success in the great cause for the promotion of which it was founded. To its funds, also, he was a liberal contributor—having devoted to their increase the profits of his edition of the psalms and hymns sold in that state. The amount of moneys received from this source, by the Society, exceeded one thousand dollars.

He was one of the projectors of the Society for Foreign Missions, established in the year 1809, at Boston, Massachusetts; and until his death was one of its active and influential officers.

Such was the fact, also, with regard to the Theological Seminary, at Andover, in that state. From its commencement, he was one of the visiters of that school, and annually attended to the duties of his office with great engagedness and punctuality. For it, his labours, his counsels, and his prayers, were ever ready; and in its prosperity he was not less interested than in that of the College over which he presided.

From the time of the establishment of the most illustrious and sublime charity that has ever engaged the attention, or drawn forth the exertions and the wealth of the pious and benevolent—"THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY"—it was the ardent wish of President Dwight, to see a similar institution established in the United States. Although a friend and promoter of smaller and more circumscribed institutions, he viewed the subject on a large scale, and was strongly impressed with the idea, that a National Society would be much more efficient, and far more extensively useful. Although he was prevented by sickness from being present at the establishment of "THE AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY," during the last year of his life; yet it was an object which not only met with his cordial approbation, but had the benefit of his warmest encouragement, and his earnest prayers; and it was a consoling consideration to him that he lived to see it accomplished, and making rapid progress towards extensive usefulness and respectability.

In addition to the foregoing institutions, a long list of more confined, but active and operative societies, formed for the purposes of piety and charity, had the benefit of his exertions, and the weight of his influence and patronage. According to his resources, he contributed largely and cheerfully; his services he rendered to an extent rarely equalled in this country; and in his endeavours to promote their usefulness and success, he was never weary.

Throughout his whole ministerial life, and especially while head of the College, he was resorted to by clergymen, from various parts of the country, for his advice and counsel on the subject of their professional concerns. Vacant parishes applied to him for his assistance in procuring ministers. In all associations of the clergy, local and general, of which he was a member, he was active and influential; able in devising, and firm in accomplishing measures for the advancement of religion, and for the good of the community. His services were extensively sought as a peacemaker, in removing difficulties between ministers and their people, and in restoring harmony in churches. Applications for private teachers, and instructers of public schools, from almost all parts of the United States, were made to him in immense numbers. The infant seminaries of our country often requested his assistance in the selection of their presidents, professors, and tutors. These various applications, not only occupied much of his time, but subjected him to a laborious correspondence, and to no inconsiderable ex-

pense. Yet his ardent desire to do good, by improving the education of the young, by diffusing valuable knowledge, by advancing the literary character of the country, and by promoting the prosperity of the church of Christ, rendered these gratuitous services for others not irksome, but pleasant.

During the period of his presidency, he was often called to preach, at the ordination of ministers, at the funerals of distinguished individuals, and on other public and extraordinary occasions. Many of these sermons were printed. The following is a catalogue of these productions, and of various others of a different character published during that period.

In 1797, he published two Discourses on the nature and danger of Infidel Philosophy, addressed to the candidates for the Baccalaureate in Yale College.—And a sermon at the funeral of the Rev. Elizur Goodrich, D. D.

In 1798, a Sermon, entitled "The Duty of Americans at the present Crisis," delivered at New-Haven, on the 4th of July in that year.

In 1800, a Discourse on the character of Washington.

In 1801, a Discourse on some events of the last century.

In 1804, a Sermon on the death of Mr. Ebenezer G. Marsh.

In 1805, a Sermon on Duelling.

In 1808, a Sermon on the opening of the Theological Institution in Andover, and the ordination of the Rev. Eliphalet Pearson, D. D.

In 1809, a Sermon occasioned by the death of Governor Trumbull.

In 1810, a Charity Sermon, preached at New-Haven.

In 1812, The Dignity and Excellence of the Gospel—a Discourse delivered at the Ordination of the Rev. Nathaniel W. Taylor.

A Discourse, in two parts, on the Public Fast, in the same year.

A Discourse, in two parts, on the National Fast, in the same year.

In 1813, a Sermon, before the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

Observations on Language, published in the Memoirs of the Connecticut Academy of Sciences, in 1816.

An Essay on Light, also published by that Institution the same year.

In the years 1810, 1811, 1812, and 1816, he published several important articles in two religious periodical publications in New-England.

In every situation in life, President Dwight was distinguished for hospitality. At New-Haven he was still more liable to company than at Greenfield; and very few men, in any profession, or employment, in that state, ever entertained more, and no one with more absolute kindness and liberality. A great proportion of re-

spectable strangers, almost all clergymen and persons of a religious character, visiting or passing through that town, were desirous of being introduced to him. It is believed that very few, who enjoyed the opportunity, ever left him without being gratified with the interview. Notwithstanding the variety and importance of his avocations, he was never unprepared to entertain strangers, or to enjoy the conversation of his friends.

Twice, during his presidency, the Corporation thought it expedient to state the circumstances of the College to the legislature; and to show that body the extreme inconvenience under which it laboured, for the want of buildings to accommodate the students. They had multiplied to such a degree, that about one third of the whole number were obliged to take rooms in the town; and, of course, were placed out of the immediate inspection, and control, of its officers:—a state of things almost necessarily productive of evil to the Institution. He was appointed one of the agents of the Board to present their statement. It will scarcely be believed that these applications were unsuccessful. On both these occasions, his address to that honourable body was universally admired as a distinguished specimen of forensic eloquence. It drew, from all who heard it, the strongest expression of applause.

But notwithstanding the failure of these applications, the reputation of the College was extended, and its numbers increased, beyond all former example. Though in want of the requisite buildings, though chiefly destitute of funds and of patronage, it still flourished; and was considered, throughout the country, as inferior to no seminary of learning in the United States. Students from every part of the Union were to be found in it; and from some of the southern states, a great proportion of the whole number who were educated at the north. The College thus derived, from the talents and exertions of its government, that reputation and advantage, for which it ought, in a far greater degree, to have been indebted to the liberality of the state.

By such long continued and unintermitted application to literary and scientifical pursuits, it would be natural to expect, that at the age of sixty-three, his constitution would have begun to experience some marks of decay and infirmity. Such, however, was not the fact. The regularity of his habits, his temperate manner of living, and the uniform course of exercise which he pursued; all united to invigorate his constitution, and render him, at that age, more active and energetic than most men of forty. No apparent declension was discernible in the powers either of his body or his mind. His understanding was as vigorous, his imagination as lively, and his industry and exertions as uniform and efficient, as they had been at any former period. In September, 1815, he undertook a journey into the western parts of the state of New-York. When he reached Catskill, he made an excursion to the summit of the neighbouring mountains, with the same views, and

for the same purposes, as he had visited so many similar objects in New-England. After travelling westward as far as Hamilton College, he relinquished the idea of proceeding farther in his journey, in consequence of the state of the roads, which had been rendered extremely heavy and disagreeable by the extraordinary equinoctial storm of that year. As usual, he preached every Sabbath on that journey, and was thought by his friends never to have discovered more force of intellect, or higher powers of eloquence, than on these occasions. This was the last journey that he ever made. On the meeting of College in October, he resumed his customary labours in the chapel, and in the recitation-room, and performed them with his usual vigour, until the month of February; when he was seized with the first threatening attack of the disease to which he finally became a victim. That attack was severe and painful, to a degree of which those who did not witness it can have no conception. It made rapid and fearful ravages in a constitution which had increased in strength and firmness for more than sixty years, and which promised, to human expectation, to last to a "good old age." His patience, as well as his faith, were now brought to a most severe and heart-searching test. The pain which he endured, and endured with unyielding fortitude, was beyond the powers of description. For several weeks, during the month of April, scarcely any hopes were entertained, either by himself, his friends, or his physicians, of his recovery. Amidst all his sufferings, not a murmur, not a repining expression, escaped from his lips. His mind was perfectly clear, and his reason unclouded. Patience under suffering, and resignation to the will of God, were exhibited by him in the most striking and exemplary manner, from day to day. His conversation was the conversation of a Christian, not only free from complaint, but, at times, cheerful and animated; his prayers were fervent, but full of humility, submission, and hope.

At the end of twelve weeks his disease assumed a more favourable appearance. By surgical aid, he gained a partial relief from his distress; and his constitutional energy, still unbroken, raised the hopes of his friends that he might recover. He was unable to preach in the chapel until after the May vacation. On the 2d of June, he delivered to his pupils a sermon, composed for the occasion during his sickness, from Psalm xciv. 17, 18, 19: "*Unless the* LORD *had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence. When I said, My foot slippeth; thy mercy,* O LORD, *held me up. In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul.*" After a pertinent and solemn introduction, and an allusion to his own sickness and sufferings, the dangerous situation in which he had recently been placed, and the little probability there was, for a time, that he should recover, he proceeded to make a practical use of the doctrine, and the subject. The scene was peculiarly impressive and affecting. In no instance, during his presidency,

until then, had he been kept from his pulpit by sickness, or any other cause. The change in his countenance and general appearance, was great and alarming. The plan of the discourse was new, the thoughts were deeply interesting, the language plain, but forcible, the manner of delivery solemn and impressive. The mind can scarcely imagine a case in which an audience, comprised of youths, full of feeling, and ardent in the pursuit of reputation and happiness, would be more deeply affected than this must have been, when hearing from the lips of their revered pastor and teacher the following truths, on the *true character* of *worldly good:*

"To him who stands on the brink of the grave, and the verge of eternity, who retains the full possession of his reason, and who at the same time is disposed to serious contemplation, all these things become mightily changed in their appearance. To the eye of such a man, their former alluring aspect vanishes, and they are seen in a new and far different light.

"Like others of our race, I have relished several of these things, with at least the common attachment. Particularly, I have coveted reputation, and influence, to a degree which I am unable to justify. Nor have I been insensible to other earthly gratifications; either to such as, when enjoyed with moderation, are innocent; or, such as cannot be pursued without sin.

"But in the circumstances to which I have referred, all these things were vanishing from my sight. Had they been really valuable in any supposable degree, their value was gone. They could not relieve me from pain; they could not restore me to health; they could not prolong my life; they could promise me no good in the life to come. What then were these things to me?

—"A person, circumstanced in the manner which has been specified, must necessarily regard these objects, however harmless, or even useful, they may be supposed in their nature, as having been hostile to his peace, and pernicious to his well-being. In all his attachment to them, in all his pursuit of them, it is impossible for him to fail of perceiving, that he forgot the interests of his soul, and the commands of his Maker; became regardless of his duty, and his salvation; and hazarded, for dross and dirt, the future enjoyment of a glorious immortality. It is impossible not to perceive, that in the most unlimited possession of them, the soul would have been beggared, and undone; that the gold of the world would not have made him rich; nor its esteem honourable; nor its favour happy. For this end he will discover, that nothing will suffice but treasure laid up in heaven; the loving-kindness of God; and the blessings of life eternal.

"Let me exhort you, my young friends, now engaged in the ardent pursuit of worldly enjoyments, to believe, that you will one day see them in the very light in which they have been seen by me. The attachment to them which you so strongly feel, is unfounded, vain, full of danger, and fraught with ruin. You will one day view

them from a dying bed. There, should you retain your reason, they will appear as they really are. They will then be seen to have two totally opposite faces. Of these you have hitherto seen but one: that, gay, beautiful, and alluring, as it now appears, will then be hidden from your sight; and another, which you have not seen, deformed, odious, and dreadful, will stare you in the face, and fill you with amazement and bitterness. No longer pretended friends, and real flatterers: they will unmask themselves, and appear only as tempters, deceivers, and enemies, who stood between you and heaven; persuaded you to forsake your God, and cheated you out of eternal life."

"But no acts of obedience will then appear to you to have merited, in any sense, acceptance with God. In this view, those acts of my life concerning which I entertained the best hopes, which I was permitted to entertain; those, which to me appeared the least exceptionable, were nothing, and less than nothing. The mercy of God, as exercised towards our lost race through the all-sufficient and glorious righteousness of the Redeemer, yielded me the only foundation of hope for good beyond the grave. During the long continuation of my disease, as I was always, except when in paroxysms of suffering, in circumstances entirely fitted for solemn contemplation, I had ample opportunity to survey this most interesting of all subjects on every side. As the result of all my investigations, let me assure you, and that from the neighbourhood of the Eternal World, *Confidence in the Righteousness of* CHRIST, is the only foundation furnished by earth, or heaven, upon which, when you are about to leave this world, you can safely, or willingly, rest the everlasting life of your souls. To trust upon any thing else, will be *to feed upon the wind, and sup up the east wind.* You will then be at the door of eternity; will be hastening to the presence of your Judge; will be just ready to give up your account of the *deeds done in the body;* will be preparing to hear the final sentence of acquittal or condemnation; and will stand at the gate of heaven or of hell. In these amazing circumstances you will infinitely need—let me persuade you to believe, and to feel, that you will infinitely need—a firm foundation, on which you may stand, and from which you will never be removed. There is no other such foundation, but *the Rock of Ages.* Then you will believe, then you will feel, that there is no other. The world, stable as it now seems, will then be sliding away from under your feet. All earthly things on which you have so confidently reposed, will recede and vanish. To what will you then betake yourselves for safety?"

On the 17th of June, the same year, the General Association of Connecticut met at New-Haven. It was a meeting of unusual interest, and he was able to be present during most of their deliberations. He rejoiced to see the actual establishment of the Domestic Missionary Society of that state for building up its waste churches;

in forming the plan of which, he cheerfully lent his assistance. The year preceding was eminently distinguished for revivals of religion; and he listened, with a heart overflowing with joy and gratitude, to the account of this glorious work of God. After the recital, the Eucharist was celebrated; and upwards of one thousand communicants, including about seventy clergymen, received the elements. He was invited by the Association to break the bread. Though pale and enfeebled by disease, and obviously exhausted by strong emotion, he consented. His prayer on that occasion was eminently humble, spiritual, and heavenly. It annihilated the distance between the Church in heaven and the Church around him; and, for the moment, they were together. The address, which blended the affecting considerations customarily growing out of the sacrament, with others derived from the triumphs of the cross to which they had just been listening, left an impression on the audience which probably will not disappear but with life.

Although the disease with which President Dwight was afflicted, and by which his life had been so seriously threatened, was not removed; yet the severity of it was so far relaxed, that he was able, through the summer, to preach steadily in the chapel, to hear the recitations of the senior class, and to attend to a class of theological students who were pursuing their studies under his direction. Still, he was not in a situation to pass a day, without resorting repeatedly to the surgical operation, by the aid of which he had in the first instance gained relief from his excruciating distress. But his mind was not idle during the intervals of his professional and official labours. In addition to the sermon which has been mentioned, he wrote, during this season, several essays on the Evidences of Divine Revelation, derived from the writings of St. Paul, and on other subjects—the whole forming matter for a considerable volume. The last of these essays was finished three days before his death. He also wrote the latter half of a poem of about fifteen hundred lines—a work of the imagination, the subject of which is, a contest between Genius and Common Sense, on their comparative merits—the question referred to and decided by Truth. He had projected a series of essays on moral and literary subjects, under the title of "*The Friend*," to be published in the manner of the Spectator, once a week, in a half sheet. Several numbers were written, as an exercise, for the purpose of satisfying himself, by the experiment, how many he could compose in a given space of time, without interfering with his other duties. He had also projected a periodical publication, to combine the common characteristics of a Review and Magazine, but upon a much more extensive plan than any single work of the kind that has appeared in this country, or even in Europe. A prospectus of this publication he had drawn up; and it was his determination, had his life been spared, and his health such as would admit of it, to have

commenced it without delay; engaging himself to furnish one quarter of the original matter in every number. It was, however, apparent to his friends, and probably to himself, that unless he should succeed in gaining relief from the disease which hung about him, his constitution, strong and vigorous as it was, must in the end give way to such uninterrupted pain and suffering. His patience and fortitude, and even his cheerfulness, did not forsake him; but fearful inroads were daily making upon his strength. His mind did not lose its activity or its vigour; but his flesh and strength daily wasted so rapidly away, that it was not to be expected that he could survive many renewed attacks of the distress which his disease occasioned. He presided at the Commencement, in September, and performed the ordinary duties on that occasion.

In the six weeks vacation, his health appeared to amend: and he was able usually to attend church, and to walk out occasionally during the week. On the sixth of October, he preached all day, and administered the sacrament in one of the churches in the town; and in the other, in the afternoon of the 13th, before the executive and the great part of the legislature of the state, he bore his public solemn testimony, in the delivery of the CXXI. sermon of the following series, against the unhallowed law authorizing divorces.

On the third of November, the second Sabbath in the term, he preached in the morning and administered the sacrament. Those who heard him will long recollect that his text was, Matt. v. 16, *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.* It was his last sermon; and the administration of the Lord's supper, which followed it, his last public act as a minister of Christ.

"Although the paleness of his countenance filled every one with anxiety, it was observed," says Professor Silliman, "that he uttered himself with his usual force and animation; and in performing the communion-service, he appeared much softened and affected; nor was he sensible of uncommon fatigue in consequence of so long a service.

"He began, as usual, to hear the senior class; and persevered, although often with extreme inconvenience, in hearing them at intervals, for three or four weeks. He often came into the recitation-room languid, and scarcely able to support himself, expressing his intention to ask only a few questions, and then retire; but, insensibly kindling with his subject, his physical system seemed temporarily excited by the action of his mind, and he would discourse with his usual eloquence and interest, and even throw a charm of sprightliness and brilliancy over his communications. He met the senior class, for the last time, on Wednesday, Nov. 27th. He caught cold, was worse from the exertion, and did not go out again.

"He still continued to hear the theological class at his house. Their last recitation was only a week before his death; his suffer-

ings were extreme; his debility scarcely permitted him to utter himself at all; but again his mind abstracted itself from its sympathy with an agonized frame; and in a discourse of one hour and a half on the doctrine of the Trinity, he reasoned and illustrated in the most cogent and interesting manner, and left an indelible impression on the minds of his pupils. It was his last effort in his delightful employment of instruction."

During his confinement, however, he was not idle; his mind was as active as when he was in sound health. Probably there are very few periods of his life, of the same length, in which he wrote more than from June to December.

He continued in this state of labour and suffering, until Tuesday the 7th of January. He had been recently afflicted by the death of his friends: the Rev. Nathan Strong, D. D. of Hartford, who was also his class-mate; and the Rev. Azel Backus, D. D. President of Hamilton College, in the state of New-York. Upon hearing of the death of Dr. Strong, he remarked, that the lights of his class were nearly extinguished; alluding to the death of that gentleman and those of the Rev. Charles Backus, of Somers, and the Rev. David Ely, D. D. of Huntington. With the latter gentleman, in addition to the friendship that had subsisted between them from their youth, he had been associated, with the utmost harmony, throughout the whole period of his presidency, as a member of the corporation of the College. On Tuesday the symptoms of his disease appeared more favourable than they had done at any time previous; and his family and physicians were led to entertain very strong hopes that it had passed its crisis, and was experiencing a happy change. On the following morning however, as he got out of bed, he was seized with a strong nervous affection, which shook his whole frame, and gave rise, in a short time, to the most alarming apprehensions. This paroxysm was succeeded by a high fever, and a constant propensity to drowsiness. When the physicians visited him at ten o'clock in the forenoon, they found it necessary to bleed him. He continued strongly affected by these various symptoms through the day. His pulse was quick, his face in some measure flushed, his brain in a considerable degree affected, and he felt a continued drowsiness, and, at times, severe turns of pain from his local disease. In the evening he became more wakeful, and the severity of his distress increased. In order to relieve him from the pain, a moderate quantity of laudanum was administered. He did not converse much on Wednesday; his excess of suffering, with the affection of the brain, put it out of his power.

He was restless a considerable part of the night, but gained an hour or two of sleep, owing, probably, to the opiate which he had taken. On Thursday morning he got out of his bed, was dressed, and sat in his chair through the day. He was not so much inclined to drowsiness as on the preceding day; but frequently groaned

from extreme pain and distress, and did not enter much into conversation through the day. At the same time, he answered all questions put to him, with clearness and promptitude; inquired particularly of his friends and neighbours, as they called to see him, concerning their health and that of their families, and showed the same affectionate interest in their welfare, that he had uniformly manifested through life. At evening he attempted to make his usual family prayer, and proceeded for a few minutes with clearness and propriety; but a paroxysm of pain rendered him incapable of utterance, and he desisted. This was the last attempt he made to pray in the family.

Through Thursday night, he became more disturbed and distressed, resting but little; and in the morning it was apparent, from his symptoms, generally, and the change of his countenance and voice, that his end was rapidly approaching. From the great strength of his constitution, and the peculiar excitement of his nervous system caused by his disease, and perhaps, from the effect which it had produced upon his mind, it was apprehended by his family, that he was not aware of his approaching dissolution. The fact was, therefore, announced to him, accompanied with a suggestion, that if he had any wishes to express, or directions to give, with regard to his worldly concerns, it was to be feared that it was necessary to attend to the subject without delay. He received the intelligence with great calmness; and, as soon as his situation would permit, proceeded to express his wishes on the subject. Under the paroxysms of pain, his mind was more prone to wander than it had been the two former days. It recurred, however, to a clear and unclouded state, when the paroxysm ceased. At short intervals through the day, when he was the most nearly free from pain, he conversed on various subjects in his usual manner. Subjects connected with the great object of his labours, his desires, and his prayers through life—the out-pouring of the Spirit of God, revivals of religion, the propagation of Christianity, and the dissemination of the Scriptures—were not only near his heart, but, when mentioned, kindled his feelings and awakened his devotion. A day or two previous to his being taken so unwell, he had received from the Rev. Dr. Marshman, at Serampore, a very elegant printed specimen of a Chinese translation of the Scriptures. On this subject, he was peculiarly interested, and expressed himself feelingly and with force, on the progress of evangelical truth among the heathen.

In the course of Friday evening, at his request, the eighth chapter of the epistle to the Romans was read to him. He listened to it with great attention, remarked upon a mistranslation in one or two places; spoke with much fervour of pious emotion on the subject of the chapter; and, at the close of it, exclaimed, "O, what a glorious apostrophe!" He also made a number of remarks on the opinions and sentiments of some of the English divines, particularly Clark and Waterland, on the doctrine of the Trinity.

The subject of his approaching dissolution was again introduced in the afternoon of that day. He said he was not aware that it was very near; that he had yet a great deal of strength; but still it might be so, as strong constitutions did sometimes suddenly give way. Upon being reminded that his religious friends would be gratified to learn his views and feelings at the prospect of death, he began to make some remarks upon the great and precious promises of the gospel, when he was seized with a paroxysm of distress, which prevented him from proceeding. A few hours before his death, the subject was, for the last time, mentioned. He appeared to comprehend the object in view; and, though he spoke with difficulty, he answered, with entire clearness, that in the extreme sickness with which he was visited in the spring, during some weeks of which he had no expectation of recovering, he had experienced more support and comfort from religion, and the promises of the gospel, than he had ever realized at any former period of his life. "Had I died then, (said he) that fact would doubtless have been considered as affording strong evidence of the sincerity and reality of my faith; but, as I recovered, it probably made but little impression." It was a sentiment often inculcated by him, that it was more safe to rely upon the tenor of a person's life, as evidence of the true state of his religious character, than upon declarations made upon a death-bed. In the above-mentioned remark, there is little reason to doubt that he alluded to that subject, and intended that it should apply to his former sentiments.

After this, he requested his brother to read to him the 17th of John. While listening to the latter verses of the chapter, he exclaimed, "O, what triumphant truths!" Afterwards the 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters were read to him. He listened attentively, and spoke with lively interest on various passages. His mind evidently wandered while the last chapter was reading, and it was not completed.

A few hours before his death, one of his friends observed to him, that he hoped he was able, in his present situation, to adopt the language of the Psalmist: "*Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for* THOU *art with me—Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*" He immediately replied, "I hope so." For several of his last hours, his organs of speech were so much affected, that it was with difficulty he could articulate distinctly. Many of his words could not be understood. There is, however, no doubt, that, during that period, his mind was unclouded, and his thoughts were fixed on death and heaven. He was occupied a great part of the time in speaking, sometimes in an audible voice, and sometimes in a whisper. Repeated instances occurred, in which his expressions were clearly understood. In all of them, his language was that of prayer and adoration. The belief that he was engaged in that delightful Christian duty was confirmed, by the peculiarly solemn and devotional expression of

his countenance. His eyes appeared to be fixed on that celestial world, whose gates, it is humbly trusted, were just opening to receive his departing spirit into the mansions of everlasting rest, prepared for him in his Father's house. That he enjoyed the use of his reason until a short time before his death, was satisfactorily manifested by his answer to one of his friends, who was sitting by him, and who asked him if he knew him. Upon which, he immediately turned his eyes towards him, looked him full in the face, and said, "Yes," with so much distinctness, as to satisfy those who were present that he perfectly understood the question, and the answer.

He did not appear, for several hours previous to his death, to suffer much pain; but continued to breathe shorter and shorter, until a few minutes before three o'clock, on Saturday morning, the 11th of January, when he expired, without a struggle or a groan.

The death of President Dwight spread a deep and general sorrow, not only through the state, but through New-England, and extensively through the Union. Beloved by relatives, esteemed by his friends, revered by his pupils, and highly honoured by his countrymen, his loss was universally considered as a great public, as well as private calamity. In the city where he had so long resided, and where his worth was universally acknowledged, he was sincerely and feelingly lamented. His funeral was attended on Tuesday, the 14th of January, by a large concourse of people from New-Haven and the neighbouring towns, and a respectable number of the clergy from different parts of the state. As a mark of respect, the stores and shops in the city were shut, and business suspended. The scene was solemn and impressive. A deep gloom pervaded the whole assembly, and every one present felt himself a mourner. The various religious services exhibited the fullest evidence of the affection and respect which the reverend gentlemen who officiated, entertained for his private virtues, as well as their deep sense of the loss which the Church, the College, and the community, had sustained in his death. In many places, in different parts of the country, sermons were delivered on the occasion. In New-York and Albany, meetings were held by the alumni of the College, resident in those cities, where various public manifestations of their sense of his virtues, their regret for his death, and respect for his character, were exhibited. Indeed, we know of but one instance that has occurred in this country, in which such extensive public expressions of sorrow for the death of any individual, or respect for his memory, have appeared.

It cannot be expected, that the character of so great and good a man, can be fully exhibited in a sketch like the present. A mere outline is all that its limits will admit.

The life of President Dwight, approaching within a few years to the duration allotted by Infinite Wisdom as the ordinary term of

the life of man, passed during one of the most important periods which has occurred since the era of Christianity. The truth of this remark will be admitted, in whatever light the subject may be considered, whether literary or scientific, political or religious. In each particular he was called to act, and in most of them a very industrious and distinguished part. In order to ascertain his true character, it may be well to view him as a man of genius and a scholar; as an instructer; as a preacher; and as a man.

For native powers of mind, he will doubtless be ranked among the first men in the history of our country. The proofs in support of this remark need not be sought from any individual source, or from his attainments in any single walk of literature or science. They may be found in every pursuit in which he was engaged, and be gathered in every stage of his progress, from the cradle to the grave. In the acquisition of knowledge, we have seen that the earliest efforts of his mind, even in infancy, were singular and extraordinary; and that his talents were as strongly marked at this early stage of his existence, as perhaps at any subsequent period of his life. At every school in which he was placed, though commonly the youngest member, he was at the head of his class. In College, notwithstanding his extreme youth and the many other embarrassments through which he had to struggle, he was surpassed by none of his companions. His acquisitions, during the eight succeeding years after he left College, although he was constantly occupied in the business of instruction, and a considerable part of the time was afflicted with disease and debility, and in a great measure deprived of the use of his eyes, were extensive and profound; not confined to a single science, or to one branch of literature, but comprehending the mathematics and logic, the languages and philology, as well as rhetoric and poetry.

The loss of the use of his eyes, at the early age of twenty-three, is not to be regarded merely as a calamity by which he was deprived of the capacity for reading and study; but in connexion with the fact that it constantly subjected him to severe and almost uninterrupted suffering. With this insurmountable embarrassment he was obliged to struggle through life. During the great part of forty years he was not able to read fifteen minutes in the twenty-four hours; and often for days and weeks together, the pain which he endured in that part of the head immediately behind the eyes, amounted to anguish. His life, it will be remembered, was devoted to a learned and laborious profession, and to literary and scientific pursuits. The knowledge which he gained from books after the period above mentioned, was almost exclusively at second hand, by the aid of others: a process slow, tedious, and discouraging. Yet he has ever been esteemed one of the best informed men this country has produced. Industry was indeed one of his most striking characteristics; but it was the industry of a mind conscious of its powers, and delighting in their exercise. All his exertions were

the effort of easy action. They cost no labour, and occasioned no fatigue. His perception was clear and rapid, his discernment acute, his invention rich, his taste correct and delicate, his imagination brilliant, his wit genuine, his judgment solid, his views comprehensive, and his reasoning faculties powerful and commanding. Never was a mind under better discipline. All his stores of thought were arranged in exact method, and every faculty was ready at the moment. This was true, in conversation, in his lectures to his class, and in his public addresses. No emergency, however sudden or pressing, appeared to surprise him or to find him unprepared. In repeated instances, on the Sabbath, when his notes were by accident left at home, and he did not discover it until a few moments before he was to use them; he has, in the instant, taken a new subject of discourse, and formed his plan so happily, and executed it so well, that none of the audience conjectured the fact, or suspected the want of preparation. His mind always rose with the occasion, and was always equal to it. It appeared to view every demand upon it as an obvious call of God. Trusting in Him, it marched directly to its purpose, without even observing those difficulties which might have proved insurmountable to others.

In one particular, he excelled most men of any age:—in the entire command of his thoughts. Having been driven by necessity to pursue his many avocations without the use of his eyes, his memory, naturally strong, acquired a power of retention unusual and surprising. It was not the power of recollecting words, or dates, or numbers of any kind. It was the power of remembering facts and thoughts: especially his own thoughts. When an event in history or biography, or a fact or principle in science, was once known, he appeared never to forget it. When a subject became once familiar to his mind, he rarely, if ever, lost its impression. In this respect his mind resembled a well arranged volume; in which every subject forms a separate section, and each view of that subject a separate page. He perfectly knew the order of the subjects; could turn to any page at will; and always found each impression as distinct and perfect as when first formed.

When engaged in the composition of sermons, or any other literary performance, not only did the conversation of those around him not interrupt his course of thinking, but while waiting for his amanuensis to finish the sentence which he had last dictated, he would spend the interval in conversing with his family or his friends, without the least embarrassment, delay, or confusion of thought. His mind took such firm hold of the subject which principally occupied it, that no ordinary force could separate it from its grasp. He was always conscious of the exact progress which he had made in every subject. When company, or any other occurrence, compelled him to break off suddenly, it would sometimes happen that he did not return to his employment until after the expiration of several days. On resuming his labours, all he required of his amanuensis was, to

read the last word, or clause, that had been written; and he instantly would proceed to dictate as if no interruption had occurred. In several instances he was compelled to dictate a letter at the same time that he was dictating a sermon. In one, a pressing necessity obliged him to dictate three letters at the same time. He did so. Each amanuensis was fully occupied; and the letters needed no correction but pointing.

A single fact will exhibit, in a striking light, the comprehension of his mind, and the admirable method of its operations. The reader is requested to examine the "Analysis," at the close of this Memoir; and to observe how extensive, and yet how logical, is the plan of his lectures. This Analysis was formed from the lectures themselves, since his decease. He wrote no plan of them himself; but in completing them, relied exclusively on the scheme of thought which existed in his own mind. We have rarely seen any work, even of much less extent, unless some treatise on mathematical or physical science, in which the perfection of mathematical arrangement is so nearly attained. It ought to be added, that the following volumes are published as they were dictated to the amanuensis; with almost no corrections except those which were owing to the mistakes of the penman, or the illegibility of his hand.

To conceive, to invent, to reason, was in such a sense instinctive, that neither employment appeared to fatigue or exhaust him. After severe and steady labour, his mind was as prepared for any species of exertion, as if it had done nothing: for the activity and sprightliness of conversation; for the closer confinement of investigation; or for the excursive range of poetry. Almost all his poetry, written subsequently to the age of twenty-three, was dictated to an amanuensis, after the unintermitted application of the day. Not unfrequently, in an autumnal or winter evening, would he compose from fifty to sixty lines in this manner. The first part of his "Genius and Common Sense" is in the stanza of "The Faery Queene," the most difficult stanza in English poetry. Repeatedly has he been known to dictate four of these stanzas, or forty-four lines, in the course of such an evening; and chiefly without any subsequent corrections.

The earliest of his poetical productions that has been preserved, though written at the age of fifteen, bears the characteristic marks, both in style and thought, of his later and more mature compositions. While he was connected with the College, either as a student or a tutor, he wrote and published several small poems, on various subjects, which were very favourably received at the time, and are still admired, for sweetness of versification, as well as for delicacy and purity of sentiment.

The early age at which he wrote the Conquest of Canaan is to be remembered in forming our estimate of the poem. It is not believed that the history of English poetry contains the account of any equal effort, made at so early an age. The subject of the

poem has been objected to, as not sufficiently interesting to render such a performance popular with the great body of readers. At the time of its publication there was, undoubtedly, some ground for this remark. It was published a short time after the peace of 1783: a period unhappily characterized by an extensive prevalence of infidelity, as well as of loose sentiments with regard to morals. In this state of things, no poem founded on a scriptural story, however meritorious in itself, however happy its plan, or brilliant its imagery, or interesting its incidents, or distinct its characters, or noble its sentiments, could fail to be in a degree unpopular; especially if breathing the purest morality, and the most exalted piety. Had its appearance been postponed to a period within the last fifteen years, during which time infidelity has given place to a reverence for the Bible, and a general regard for the doctrines which it contains, there is little reason to doubt that its reception would have been still more flattering to the author, and more just to its own merit as a work of genius. The Conquest of Canaan contains abundant evidence of rich invention, of harmonious versification, of a brilliant fancy, of strong powers of description, of a sublime imagination, of vigorous thought, and of the most pure and virtuous sentiment.

In addition to his attainments in classical learning, and the sciences in general, President Dwight had acquired a vast fund of information on almost all the concerns of human life. His acquaintance with books was extensive: comprising not only those appropriate to his profession as a minister, and his office as president of the College, but on all important and interesting subjects. He was thoroughly read in ancient and modern history, geography, biography, and travels. Few works of this description, especially those of the two last classes, escaped his attention. With the pursuits of agriculture, he was practically as well as theoretically conversant. In the cultivation of his garden he took peculiar pleasure, and displayed an uncommon degree of skill and science. Of his extensive knowledge on these subjects, his poem, called "Greenfield Hill," affords satisfactory evidence. One part of that work, entitled "*The Farmer's Advice to the Villagers*," contains a body of information, and of sound advice, addressed to that valuable class of men, of the utmost practical utility. In truth, it is difficult to name a subject, of any considerable importance, connected with the common pursuits of men in the business of life, which he had not made the subject of accurate observation and close thought; on which he had not collected many valuable facts; or about which he was not able to communicate much that was interesting and useful.

It has been seen, that a large proportion of President Dwight's life was devoted to the instruction of youth. From the age of seventeen to sixty-four, he was scarcely ever entirely disengaged from that employment; and there were not more than two years of that period, in which he did not pursue it as his constant busi-

ness. His first effort afforded a sure promise of that high degree of excellence, in this interesting employment, to which he afterwards attained. In the course of his life, he assisted in educating between two and three thousand persons.

In the great change produced in the College, during his tutorship, by his efforts and those of his associates, his own exertions were of primary importance. He continued much longer in the office of tutor than they did, and, of course, had a greater opportunity to execute the plans for improvement which they had jointly devised, and put in operation.

It was unquestionably a fortunate circumstance for him, when he entered upon the presidency, that the public had full confidence in his capacity to fulfil its duties. It is, however, to be remembered, that this confidence was not, in any measure, founded upon mere expectation, or calculation. It rested upon a thorough acquaintance with his experience and success in the arduous and difficult business of instruction. The possession of this confidence, enabled him to commence his labours in the institution according to his own ideas of usefulness and practicability; and to adopt such a course of measures as the exigency of the case required. And to his independence and energy, his industry and devotion to his duty, is the College eminently indebted for the high character to which it was elevated, amidst all its difficulties, and embarrassments, at the time of his accession, and during his continuance in the office.

One of his most important qualifications as the head of such an institution, was an intimate knowledge of the character and feelings of young men, which, by long observation, he had acquired. The possession of this knowledge, so indispensably necessary, and yet so rarely to be met with, enabled him to direct his efforts in the administration of the government, and the application of discipline in the most judicious and efficacious manner to accomplish the objects in view. Those objects were, the peace and reputation of the College, and the character and highest interests of the students. Having adopted a system which was, in its nature and tendency, parental, he watched over the conduct and welfare of his academical children with affection and solicitude. So successful was he in the application of this system, that the youths who were placed under his care, loved and revered him as an affectionate father. When admonition or censure, or even more severe measures, at any time became necessary; his course of proceeding was in a high degree efficacious and salutary. These admonitions and censures were delivered in a manner, affectionate, indeed, but plain and searching; and rarely failed of producing their intended effect. Many a youth, whose conduct had subjected him to the discipline of the College, has found his stubborn temper subdued, his heart melted into contrition, and himself compelled to submission and obedience, by the private, solemn, but pathetic and eloquent remonstrances of his kind and affectionate teacher.

President Dwight's talents as an instructer, were no where more conspicuous than in the recitation-room of the senior class.

The year commenced with the study of *rhetoric*, in which the lectures of Blair were the text-book. The questions naturally arising from the lesson were first answered, and the principles of the author freely examined. This usually occupied not more than half an hour; and was succeeded by a familiar extemporaneous lecture on the subject, which filled up the residue of the two hours commonly devoted to his recitations. This lecture was often enlivened by anecdote and humour, and interspersed with striking illustrations. It frequently exhibited lively sallies of the imagination, and occasionally high specimens of eloquence. Yet it was in fact, though not in form, a regular dissertation, a connected chain of powerful reasoning, calculated to leave a distinct and permanent impression on the mind. When the course of rhetoric was completed, that of *logic and metaphysics* succeeded; in which the regular text-books were Duncan and Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding. After this followed *ethics;* when Paley's Moral Philosophy was studied. In these recitations, also, a similar method was adopted. These three courses occupied three days in the week through the year. On each of these days the class exhibited written compositions. Two more were devoted to forensic disputation. The discussions of the students were commonly written, but at times extemporaneous. When these discussions were finished, the President closed the debate in an argument giving a comprehensive view of the question; and occupying, according to its importance, sometimes the space of half an hour, and sometimes that of several recitations. The series of questions thus discussed usually involved the more important disputable points in science, politics, morals, and theology. Many of his decisions, as specimens of reasoning and eloquence, were not surpassed by his happiest public efforts. On Saturday, Vincent's "Exposition of the Shorter Catechism" was recited. The lesson terminated in a few minutes, and was followed by a theological lecture on the subject. At the close, he heard declamations. The students regularly looked forward to the senior year as peculiarly interesting and important; in which their minds were to be disciplined and furnished for action. No compulsion was necessary to secure their presence in the recitation-room. Even those who had previously been indolent, attended of choice. In *each* of the four courses of rhetoric, logic and metaphysics, ethics and theology, as taught in Vincent; he spent more time in instructing his class, than is customarily spent in the regular lectures of professors in those sciences. In addition to this, he was the stated preacher twice on the Sabbath; addressed the students at length in the theological chamber on Saturday evening; superintended the general administration of the College government; wrote, by the assistance of his pupils or of a regular amanuensis, almost all the works which he ever wrote;

and attended, with marked punctuality, to all the calls of civility and friendship. It ought here to be remembered, that for the first twenty years of his Presidency he was rarely able to read so much as a single chapter in the Bible in the twenty-four hours.

One important feature of his administration was the selection of his assistant officers of the faculty. The professorship of Theology, it has been mentioned, was occupied by himself. The others were filled with much younger gentlemen than had been usual, the education of nearly all of whom he had superintended; and with whose talents and qualifications he was thoroughly acquainted. The advantages of this course were numerous, and the wisdom of it has been fully proved and acknowledged. The College faculty entertained perfect confidence in one another, and entire harmony of opinion as to the system of government. The welfare of the College was a common interest; to promote which, they lent their whole united influence. In its administration, they always moved as one man. The experience, judgment, and energy of the President, and the active and vigorous co-operation of his younger associates, had the happiest effects on its good order and regularity, even in times the most turbulent and threatening. The consequence was, that Yale College was tranquil, at a period well remembered, when almost every other public seminary in the Union was shaken to its centre.

As a minister and preacher of the gospel, it is not easy to convey an adequate idea of his characteristic excellence. Having been compelled, from the weakness of his eyes, to adopt the plan of preaching without notes; his sermons, except those designed for extraordinary occasions, were for the first twenty years chiefly unwritten. Usually, he barely noted the general divisions, and some of the most important and leading ideas. There is no doubt, that this mode had its peculiar advantages; nor that his style and manner, as an extemporaneous preacher, were more popular and captivating, than at a later period, when his discourses were written at length. When unconfined by notes, the whole field of thought was before him. Into that field he entered; conscious where his subject lay, and by what metes and bounds it was limited; and enjoying also that calm self-possession and confidence of success, which *trial* alone can give, and which every successive effort had only served to increase. Within these limits, his powers had full scope, his imagination was left to range at will, his feelings were kindled, and his mind became in the highest degree *creative*. Its conceptions were instantaneous; its thoughts were new and striking; its deductions clear and irresistible; and its images, exact representations of what his eye saw, living, speaking, and acting. When we add, that these were accompanied by the utmost fluency and force of language, a piercing eye, a countenance deeply marked with intellect, a strong emphasis, a voice singular for its compass and melody, an enunciation remarkably clear and distinct,

a person dignified and commanding, and gestures graceful and happy; we need not inform the reader, that his pulpit efforts, at this period, possessed every characteristic of animated and powerful eloquence. Many instances of its effects upon large audiences are remembered, and might easily be mentioned, which were most striking proofs of its power over the feelings and the conscience.

In the formation of his sermons, he pursued a course, in a great degree, original. Texts familiar by common use among preachers, to the minds of his audience, would form the subject of discourses, new, solemn, and impressive. The truth to be illustrated was often new; the arrangement and arguments were new, the images were always new, and the thoughts peculiarly his own. The very weakness of his eyes, which occasioned him so much pain and self-denial, was, in some respects, advantageous. He could not himself read the sermons of others. Religious books of a different class were read aloud in his family on the Sabbath. And most rarely indeed was he permitted to listen to the sermons of his brethren. Thus, deriving no assistance from the efforts of others, he was compelled to depend exclusively on the resources of his own intellect. Happily these were rich and inexhaustible. It is probably owing to this fact, that his sermons bear the characteristic stamp of his own mind; and are, throughout, in the highest sense, *his own*. In this respect, in a fair claim to originality of thought, of method, and of illustration, it is confidently believed, that the sermons of President Dwight need not shrink from a comparison with those of any other writer.

In his extemporaneous efforts, though his fancy was ever visibly active, still it was controlled by judgment and taste. They were indeed more richly ornamented with imagery than most of his written sermons; yet figures were introduced, not merely because they were beautiful, but for the purpose of illustration or impression. His own views of the duty of a minister of Christ, in this respect, are happily conveyed in several of the discourses in these volumes; and still more fully in some of his occasional sermons. He considered him bound to forget himself, and remember nothing but the purpose for which he is sent: the salvation of his hearers. Every attempt at display, every attempt to exhibit his own talents, or taste, or fancy, or learning, in a preacher, was, in his view, an obvious prostitution of his office to private and unhallowed purposes. His rules and his conduct were in this respect harmonious.

After his appointment to the office of professor of theology, in 1805, when he began steadily to employ an amanuensis, he turned his attention more to writing his sermons at length. The frequent calls upon him to preach at different places, on extraordinary occasions, and a disposition to render his systematic discourses to the students as nearly correct and perfect as possible, probably had influence with him in the adoption of this course. His Systematic Sermons had cost him much labour and research. They were fa-

vourite discourses with the public at large, and with his pupils; many of whom took notes of them every Sabbath. He thought, if they possessed the merit ascribed to them, that they ought to be written out. Other considerations also had their weight. He observed an increasing attachment, in some parts of the country, to a florid and highly embellished style of composition: in his own view, owing to a vitiated taste; involving a substitution of ornament for thought, and of sound for sense; and wholly subversive of the very end of preaching. This mode of writing was gaining popularity among his own pupils; and he felt desirous, as far as possible, to counteract it. Knowing the efficacy of a teacher's example on the conduct of those under his care, he determined carefully to avoid every thing of this nature in his own discourses; and to subject his mind, naturally fond of imagery, to a severer discipline than it would submit to in the moment of extemporaneous effort.

The discourses in these volumes obviously required, in this respect, as well as in others, peculiar care. Their primary object is to explain and prove the great truths of theology; and their second, to enforce them on the conscience, and show their practical influence on the heart and life. They are not merely *theological lectures;* but are, in the strictest sense, *sermons.* Yet, as the purpose in the body of each discourse is the discovery of truth, the use of figurative language, except for illustration, would there have been improper. In the application, it might be admitted to enforce and enhance it. The reader will, we think, admire the good sense displayed in this particular. In the division of the subject he will never find figurative language introduced. The body of the discourse, if, as is most commonly the case, the subject be merely argumentative, is almost equally destitute of it. If, however, it be a subject rather requiring description and enhancement than proof; as in the discourses on heaven, on the holy angels, on the creation of the earth and of man, on the resurrection, the last judgment, and the future happiness of the righteous; it will be seen that the author's mind rises with his subject. Having heard those discourses to which we have just now referred, we have ever viewed them as distinguished models of sacred eloquence.

The series of Theological Sermons was written out at the close of 1809. After completing it, he wrote out many of his miscellaneous sermons, both doctrinal and practical. These were intentionally less pruned than the former, but more so than his earlier efforts. There is little reason to doubt, that these, should they ever be published, will prove more entertaining, to the mass of readers, than the discourses in these volumes. They discover equal talent, present a greater variety of subject and of manner, and usually require less mental exertion in the perusal. Among them are the sermons preached on the Sabbath preceding the Commencement, to the candidates for the Baccalaureate. They were

addressed to his immediate pupils, when just about to leave the institution; to bid an adieu to him as their instructer, and to each other as companions, and to engage in the busy scenes of life. Over their conduct he had long watched with unremitting care; and for their present and future welfare, he felt the highest degree of solicitude. They contain an accurate development of the human character, and of the temptations, follies, and vices of the world; as well as the purest moral and religious sentiments, enforced with the feeling and fervency of parental affection, and accompanied by the parting counsels of a wise and experienced preceptor and friend.

Of the miscellaneous sermons at large, our limits forbid us to attempt a delineation. We will mention one of them, which appears to have been conceived in a peculiarly auspicious moment; and has been eminently followed with the blessing of God. His students will realize that we intend the discourse on Jeremiah viii. 20: *The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.* In two instances, the delivery of it was obviously the commencement of a revival of religion among his pupils; in the first of which nearly half of them were united to the College Church. Similar consequences have been ascribed to its delivery on two other occasions, in different places. Never have we witnessed effects on mixed audiences equally solemn and powerful, from any sermon, as in several instances from this. Many beside his pupils ascribed to it their first impressions on religious subjects.

His sermons were uncommonly intelligible to all classes of people. His division of his subject was natural, neat, and easily remembered. His style, though at times highly ornamented and elevated, was still plain and perspicuous; and his delivery, though occasionally rapid, was clear and distinct. Owing to these qualities, the illiterate, and persons of ordinary capacity, were able to understand him without difficulty.

Another characteristic of his preaching was, a constant regard to practical effect. Even the sermons which compose these volumes, the object of which was, primarily, to exhibit to his pupils a complete system of Christian doctrines, will be found, in their application, to have this discriminating character. It was impossible for him to enter the desk but as the herald of reconciliation. He could not fail to discover his affecting sense of the greatness of the Being who sent him, or of the infinite importance of the message which he brought. And his most obvious purpose was to accomplish the salvation of those to whom it was delivered.

It is believed, on the best evidence, that this purpose was, to an unusual extent, accomplished by his preaching. Immediately before the commencement of his presidency, the College Church, among the students, was almost extinct; it came at last to consist of only two members, and, soon after his accession, it dwindled to a single person. During the greater part of his continuance in of-

fice it embraced at least one fourth; in various instances one third; and in one, upwards of one half of the students. Perhaps no object of contemplation afforded him higher pleasure, towards the close of life, than the number of his pupils who had become, or were intending to become, preachers; especially when he remembered how frequently the labours of the former had been crowned with success.

In the performance of the other exercises of public worship, he greatly excelled. His manner of reading the Scriptures, and sacred poetry, was peculiarly happy and impressive. In the appropriateness, variety, fluency, copiousness, fervency, and elevation of prayer, as it regarded subjects, sentiment, and language, he was nearly without a rival. Entirely free from form, from tiresome repetition, and from lukewarmness, and under the influence of the deepest abasement and prostration of soul, his heart appeared to be melted, and "his lips to be touched as with a live coal from off the altar," when he was engaged in this sublime and delightful duty.

But his usefulness as a minister was not confined to his labours in the pulpit. He was emphatically the friend, the counsellor, and the guide of his younger brethren in the sacred profession. In the language of one of his pupils, "He was, indeed, a father to New-England—her moral legislator. His life is an era in her history. To the churches of his persuasion in that country, he was a guardian, a friend, a counsellor. In the hour of trial, they found support in his firmness, assistance in his wisdom, and encouragement in his prayers. As a peacemaker, he was eminently blessed; for his advice was asked, and given in the spirit of Christian humility and justice." Great numbers of the clergy had, first or last, been his pupils: he had been their friend and adviser, as well as their instructer; and they felt the most implicit confidence in his disposition, and his capacity, to assist them in their embarrassments and difficulties. For this purpose they resorted to him with perfect freedom, and were received with the utmost kindness and respect. He entered at once into their interests and feelings; and the services which he rendered them were numerous and important. Having the advantage of long observation and experience, an extensive acquaintance with the state of the country, and the character, wants, and condition, of its inhabitants; and being the centre of application for the supply of instructers, both literary and religious, for a wide extent of country; he was able to adapt his opinions to the exigencies of the various cases in which he was consulted; and to furnish those who sought it with employment and support. Few imagine how many parishes in New-England, New-York, and elsewhere, have, through his agency, been furnished with clergymen.

In short, his character, as a preacher, may be summed up in the language of the writer last alluded to: "While he 'shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God,' he strengthened his arguments by illustrations from the history of nations, and the biography

of individuals. His application of Scripture doctrines and texts to the ever-varying aspect of human life; his insight into the groundwork of character, and the motives to action; his admirable sketches, as it were, with the very pencil, and in the very colouring of the inspired writers, distinguished him from the mere commentator on texts, and the sentimental moralist. Of his eloquence, as with most other great orators, few can judge correctly, but those who have heard him. They will never forget him, either in this world or the next. To simplicity in manner and matter, he added dignity; to ease, he added energy; to fervour, he added humility. Preaching too often seems, with ministers, the work of a day or an hour; but with him it was the work of Eternity. He preached as a sinner and dying man himself; he preached as in the presence of God, and of the spirits of just men made perfect; he preached as though he saw his crown of glory ever before him; as though he heard the Saviour saying, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." "His sermons were not adorned with as many decorations of taste and ornaments of imagination as those of some other distinguished pulpit orators. But in the primary qualities of real eloquence, his sermons were eminently rich: in powerful appeals to the heart, in vivid pictures of vice and virtue, sketched from the life; in awful denunciation; in solemn remonstrance; in fervent intercession."

It remains only to view President Dwight, as a man, in the various walks of private life, exhibiting the virtues which peculiarly adorn that interesting station. And perhaps, no part of the task which has been undertaken in this account, has been more difficult of execution. "It is rare," says Professor Silliman, who had been long and intimately acquainted with him in private as well as in public life, "that a man so great and splendid in the public eye, is in private life so desirable: for to his particular friends, his society was delightful, and the only effect of long and intimate acquaintance with him was, to exact towards him every sentiment of respect, admiration, and affection." "In the domestic and social circle," says another of his pupils, "Dr. Dwight will ever be remembered with the tenderest affection, and the most sincere regret." "In private society," says a third, "Dr. Dwight possessed uncommon powers to please and to instruct. With an inexhaustible stock of knowledge on almost every subject, and an ease of communication to which a parallel can hardly be found, he easily accommodated his remarks to the character and means of improvement of those with whom he conversed; and seldom failed to excite the highest respect and admiration. From the weakness of his eyes, and his consequent inability to employ himself much in reading, except by the assistance of others, he was led to devote more of his time to the society of his friends, than, perhaps, in other circumstances, he would have judged expedient. He ever considered the diversified conversation of a social circle, as affording the most rational

and, at the same time, the most entertaining of all amusements."

"A disappointment (says a fourth) is often felt, on our introduction to men who have attained eminence for talents and piety. By habits of seclusion and abstraction, they have, perhaps, lost the ability to mingle with interest in the concerns of the passing day. It was not so with President Dwight. In his manners he was, in the highest degree, dignified, affable, and polite. Like Johnson, he shone in no place with more distinguished splendour, than in the circle of the friends he loved; when the glow of animation lighted up his countenance, and a perpetual stream of knowledge and wisdom flowed from his lips. As his had been a life of observation and reflection, rather than of secluded study, his acquisitions were all practical; they were all at hand, ready to enrich and adorn his conversation. In theology and ethics, in natural philosophy and geography, in history and statistics, in poetry and philology, in husbandry and domestic economy, his treasures were equally inexhaustible. Interesting narration, vivid description, and sallies of humour; anecdotes of the just, the good, the generous, the brave, the eccentric; these all were blended in fine proportions to form the bright and varied tissue of his discourse. Alive to all the sympathies of friendship, faithful to its claims, and sedulous in performing its duties, he was beloved by many from early life, with whom he entered on the stage, and whom, as Shakspeare says, he "grappled to his soul with hooks of steel." It is no small proof of his amiableness, that all who gained the most intimate access to him, whether associates, or pupils, or amanuenses, admired, revered, and loved him most."

These various testimonies, written by so many different persons, all having the best means of judging, while they evince his excellence in private life, also show how impossible it must be, in a sketch like the present, to give an adequate view of the character of a man so greatly distinguished in every public station which he was called to occupy; so justly admired in the circle of his friends; and so tenderly beloved in the bosom of his own family.

The purity of his sentiments and language was equally remarkable and exemplary. In conversation, he not only observed the strictest delicacy himself, in his remarks, and allusions, and anecdotes; but, by an influence at once silent and perceptible, induced every one else to do the same. The same is true of his writings. It is believed, that in the whole of his voluminous works there cannot be found a single sentence which is not consistent with the most refined purity. Nor, after an intimate acquaintance of more than forty years, is the instance recollected in which he has been heard to utter an expression, or thought, which would have excited the apprehensions of innocence, or wounded the ear of female sensibility.

He was, from infancy, distinguished for the most conscientious regard to truth. This was obvious in every day's conversation.

He never allowed himself to exaggerate, nor in any degree to misrepresent. In no situation, whether surprised by strong temptation, or urged by the most pressing necessity, would he sanction the slightest deviation from absolute verity. Equally sincere was he in his professions. The kindness and services which he rendered, always exceeded the expectations which he had intentionally raised. He had too much self-respect to keep any man in the dark as to his opinions or principles. He entertained none which he was not willing to communicate to the world, and his declarations concerning them were mathematically true.

No less was he remarkable for the most scrupulous regard to decorum. His manners were those of the polished gentleman—characterized by ease, grace, and dignity. There was no distance, no reserve, no visible consciousness of superior intellect. His politeness was not a mere exterior. It was the great law of kindness, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," exemplified in his daily intercourse with those around him. It was, thus, universal—appearing in his countenance, his conversation, and his conduct, exhibited equally towards persons of every condition, and delicately regarding the characters, the circumstances, the feelings, and the prejudices of those who were present. All men were easy and happy in his company. Amidst all his avocations and labours, he was ever ready to attend to the calls of hospitality, of civility, and of friendship; calls which were multiplied upon him to an unprecedented degree, but which were never suffered to pass by unheeded. The courteousness of his manners was exemplified in his intercourse with the poor and the humble, as well as with those in more elevated stations, by his treating them at all times with kindness, listening to their wants, and, as far as lay in his power administering to their necessities.

His charities were unceasing, and, in proportion to his resources, rarely surpassed. The beggar at the door never went empty away. Those who suffered in silence, he continually sought out, and sent them unsolicited relief. Those whom the providence of God had suddenly impoverished, never applied to him for help in vain. To religious charities, to the education of young men of piety, to the distribution of Bibles, to the support of missions, to the assistance of destitute churches, he loved peculiarly to contribute. The only privilege of the affluent which he coveted, was the good which they might do with their wealth, and the pleasure which they might enjoy in doing it.

No man ever loved his friends with more sincerity or constancy, or with warmer affection. His house, his hand, and his heart, were always open to welcome them. He never deserted them in distress, or because they were the objects of reproach and calumny. Instead of this, he chose rather to withdraw from those who attacked them, however numerous, or wealthy, or powerful. To their failings he was kind—never, by even a remote allusion, giv-

ing others reason to suppose that he observed them. Their excellencies he loved to acknowledge. The characteristics, in his view, which ought especially to govern in the choice of intimate friends, were not talents, nor learning, nor wealth, nor influence, nor polish, nor fashion: they were sincere affection, tried personal worth, and refinement of the mind. In this respect few have been more happy. In his intercourse with his friends and with others, all his purposes were kind, and generous, and honourable. He would not condescend to wear disguise, nor to associate with those before whom it was necessary.

Personal independence, and decision of character, were inwrought in the very texture of his mind. He was afraid of no man. The history of his life presented no vulnerable points, and he knew that reproach and slander could not do him injury. While he received intelligence and advice from every quarter, and would change his purpose if a sufficient reason was given; yet, without such a reason, no influence nor entreaties, no flattery nor threats, could induce him to change it. His purpose was his duty. Motives of a higher nature than any which present objects can afford, led him to embrace it, and no other motives could prompt him to relinquish it. For this, he was ready at all times, if it became necessary, to sacrifice the objects which are usually most valued: the friendship of any friend; the civilities and courtesy of the rich, the fashionable, and the powerful; and the applause of the many. The formation of his opinions on religious subjects, he appeared ever to consider as a transaction exclusively between God and himself. Aiming to leave other things wholly out of view, he resorted to the Bible as the perfect standard of faith, and as absolutely obligatory on the conscience; believing that his own mind was darkened by many errors, and needed the illumination of the Spirit of light. Various opinions, ardently embraced when a youth, he afterwards relinquished, from a conviction that they were unfounded. His sentiments, on all important religious subjects, will be found in these volumes. What he believed to be true, he would preach, in all the extent in which he received it, leaving the consequences with God. His views of Christian catholicism, and of the importance of truth, will be found in several of the following sermons. His feelings, and conversation, and conduct, towards those who differed from him, were evangelically liberal. Virtue he described as "*voluntary obedience to truth*," and vice, as "*voluntary obedience to error*." He held the Scriptures to be a plain intelligible revelation of the will of God; and every man who has them, to be equally responsible for his faith as for his practice. No considerations would induce him to be civil to error, as such; or to narrow the distinction between error and truth. While he treated those whom he believed to embrace errors (even fundamental ones) with kindness; on all proper occasions, he exposed their errors without hesitation and without fear. The value of their applause and their

friendship was "less than nothing," in comparison with the value of truth, and of a clear conscience before God.

All who have attempted to draw his character have mentioned him as eminently *disinterested*. Few men have originated more numerous or more important institutions or measures. Yet it is believed, that in no instance whatever was he even suspected to connect a private selfish end, his own personal benefit, or the advancement of any member of his family, with that which was avowed and ostensible. The purposes which he professed were the only purposes he had in view. To accomplish them, he could not stoop to management and finesse. They were honourable purposes. He declared them with the sincerity of truth, and pursued them with the dignity of virtue. So perfectly known was his character in this respect, that the instance probably cannot be named, in which any man ventured to approach him for his assistance in a manner which was not direct and honourable.

The love of money appears to have had no influence over his mind. He viewed wealth not as a blessing in itself, but in the good which it enabled its possessor to do to himself, his family and others. He had a right "to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of his labour under the sun," and to make adequate provision for his family; but the residue was vested in his hands to promote the well-being of his fellow-men. These were his principles. Were the amount of property that he relinquished for the benefit of the Institution over which he presided to be stated, those who know how limited were his resources, would view the degree in which they were reduced by his liberality as literally romantic.

His temper was ardent and natively impetuous, but under the discipline of kindness and of principle it had been chiefly subdued. If its impetuosity was ever manifested, it was against conduct which was base and dishonourable. If at any time, through misinformation, he had been led to form incorrect views of men or of conduct; when convinced of it, no man more cheerfully retracted his error. His ardour was daily conspicuous in his friendships, his love of rectitude, and his zeal in doing good. Though ardent, he was amiable and affectionate, and possessed an almost child-like simplicity and tenderness of heart. Never have we known the individual, whose feelings were more uniformly or more powerfully excited by the recital of a tale of distress, of a kind and honourable action, or of an account of the triumphs of the cross.

The interest which he took in the great and splendid Christian charities which characterize the present era, was extinguished only with the lamp of life. While able to converse, the establishment, labours, and success of Bible Societies and Missionary Societies, maintained their hold upon his heart. Such was the excitement which, from time to time, during the few last days of his life, the accounts of their success produced upon his mind, that it was sufficient for the moment to control the influence of his disease; to bring

back his thoughts, occasionally bewildered by the intenseness of his sufferings, to entire collectedness; and to enable him to give vent to his feelings in the lively and animated language of fervent and pious gratification.

In the nearest relations of private life, President Dwight was an example of almost all that is excellent and praiseworthy. As a son, he manifested towards his parents, on all occasions, the most dutiful and cheerful obedience and the most reverential affection. So true is this remark, that his mother declared, a short time before her death, that *she did not know the instance in which he ever disobeyed a parental command, or failed in the performance of a filial duty.* As a husband and a father, his life was eminently lovely. It was an uniform display of conjugal affection and paternal tenderness: a daily exemplification of the great principle of benevolence, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." His highest earthly enjoyment was found at the fireside, in the bosom of his family. Their happiness was his own; and to promote it, no exertions were too great. As a brother, it has been seen he was affectionate and generous; supplying to his numerous brothers and sisters, as far as the nature of things would admit, the severe loss they had sustained in the morning of their lives, in the death of an excellent father. As a friend and neighbour, let the united testimony of the various communities in which at different periods of his life he resided, give his character. Rarely indeed does an instance occur, in which the influence of individual example has been more beneficially experienced. It was not merely that he was kind to his neighbours, polite and hospitable to strangers, and charitable to the poor; and that, as far as in him lay, he followed peace with all men: there was a moral charm that uniformly surrounded him, which was felt in every circle, and spread its benign influence through the region in which he dwelt.

His sentiments with regard to personal religion, are every where unfolded in the following work; but especially in the sermon on the Nature of Faith; in those on Regeneration; and in those on the Two Great Commandments. We have met with no other account of these subjects, which has appeared to us equally definite and satisfactory. Religion he viewed as having its seat only in the heart; and himself, and all men, by nature, as entirely destitute of it; and remaining so voluntarily until renewed by God the Holy Ghost. Wherever it existed, he supposed it to be comprehended in *love;* and proved to exist only by the fruits of love visible in the life. His views of his own attainments as a Christian were unaffectedly humble. On this subject he was reluctant to converse; conceiving that real piety is unostentatious, and that mere professions are of little value. Rarely, if ever, has he been known to mention it when numbers were present; and not often before a single Christian friend. He never spoke of himself as a Christian. His humility in this respect was striking in his sermons and his

prayers: when speaking of the Christians present, never including himself among them. His declarations on this subject, in health and in sickness, always were, that he did not *know* that he had any personal interest in the mediation of Christ; that the promises of the Gospel were great and glorious; that he was usually free from distressing doubts and apprehensions; and that his hopes were often bright and supporting. He loved retirement for religious meditation, self-examination, and secret prayer; and spent, it is believed, a portion of every day in the discharge of these duties. His prayers in the family and in public exhibited, so far as the human mind can judge, unusual evidence of contrition, self-abasement, trust, resignation, gratitude, and love. We have not known the individual whose powers to instruct, or to interest, in conversation, were superior to his; yet it was his highest pleasure to converse on religious subjects, and where propriety permitted it, on experimental religion. Such was the state of his thoughts and feelings at all times in company, that his mind seemed willing to enter on the contemplation of religion at every opportunity. It was not, however, mere speculation. It was a living exhibition of the various affections of piety and benevolence as they came warm from the heart.

His life was a steady course of cheerfulness, as well as of submission; and this, under trials well calculated to determine the character. Probably no man, without actual experience, can realize how great a trial of patience it is to endure pain in the eyes every day for more than forty years, uninterrupted except by the hours of sleep, and often intense and agonizing; to be deprived by it, for weeks together, of a great part of his necessary sleep; to be cut off, absolutely, from the pleasure of reading; and to be continually threatened by it with blindness, and, occasionally, with apoplexy. Not only, however, did he not murmur nor repine—he was resigned. He was more—he was universally cheerful and happy; and always ready to contribute to the happiness of those around him. He chose rather to remember his blessings than his afflictions; and felt that he had not deserved the least mercy. Nay, his very afflictions he viewed as among his greatest blessings.

Death often invaded his peace. He lost a father in the prime of life and usefulness, whom he ever mentioned with the highest reverence; three brothers, at the age of manhood, whom he tenderly lamented; a mother, endeared to him by every consideration which could affect the heart of filial piety; two sisters, for whom he felt no ordinary warmth of attachment; and a son, a youth of fine promise, at the age of nineteen, just after he had completed his education. The effect of these repeated strokes was obviously such as a Christian should desire. Their evident tendency was to soften the heart, to subdue the will, to loosen the attachment to terrestrial good, to enliven the conscience, and to assist the soul in its assumption of the heavenly character. This was peculiarly obser-

vable of the death of his son. It occurred before the termination of a remarkable revival of religion among the students of the seminary; during which he was believed to have become possessed of personal piety. Had he lived, he intended to have been a clergyman. He died at a distance from home; and his father did not arrive in season to be present at his funeral. Rarely have we witnessed parental sorrow equally intense and permanent. Rarely could he mention his son without a faltering voice, and cheeks suffused with tears.

Those who witnessed his sufferings during the two last years of his life, were not more struck with their severity, nor with the fortitude which he discovered under them, than with the marked effect of them upon his mind. Often, for months together, the pain which he endured was not only unintermitted, but, in its severest forms, spasmodical. During the continuance of these convulsions, which recurred frequently during the day, so intense was the anguish, that the sweat would roll down his forehead for many minutes together in continued streams. Yet such was his fortitude, that though compelled at times to groan from severity of distress, he never once forgot himself so far as to murmur or complain. But while these sufferings thus ravaged the body, and prepared it for dissolution, their effect upon the soul was obviously salutary. Accustomed, for many years, to the daily contemplation of death, he now witnessed its gradual approach with serenity and peace. In the midst of his sorrows he found consolations "that were neither few nor small." He grew continually more and more humble, gentle, meek, and resigned; more and more disposed to give up every trust but in his Saviour. Though his intellect retained all its vigour, yet his temper became, in an eminent degree, that of a lovely child. His affections were exquisitely tender. Their native character seemed entirely gone, and they resembled the affections of heaven. His views, his hopes, his purposes, and his joys, were heavenly; and nothing terrestrial seemed to remain, except his earthly tabernacle, which was just ready to be laid in the grave, there to rest in hope. When called to pass the dark valley, his Shepherd appeared to be with him. His rod and His staff, they comforted him. Though frequently bewildered through excess of pain, yet no distressing fear assailed him. He saw the presence of the grim Destroyer with tranquillity and hope; yielded up his soul without a struggle; and, as we trust with undoubting confidence, found a glorious welcome into the "house not made with hands; eternal in the heavens."

His life was eminently useful and lovely. His death was peaceful and happy to himself, but most widely and deeply lamented by his countrymen at large, as well as by his family, his many friends, and the Church of Christ. His eternity, we trust, will pass among angels and the spirits of the just, in their immortal progress in knowledge, happiness, and virtue.

Over the grave of President Dwight, the Corporation of the College have erected a neat marble monument, on which is the following inscription:

Hic Sepultus jacet
Vir ille admodum reverendus
Timotheus Dwight, S. T. D. LL. D.
Collegii Yalensis Præses,
et ejusdem
Sacrosanctæ Theologiæ Professor;
Qui
De Literis, de Religione, de Patria
Optime meritus;
Maximo suorum et bonorum omnium
Desiderio,
Mortem obiit,
Die XI. Januar. Anno Domini
MDCCCXVII.
Ætatis suæ
LXV.

On the opposite side.
Ecclesiæ Greenfieldiensis Pastor
Annos XII.
Collegii Yalensis Tutor
VI.
Præses
XXII.
Senatus
Collegii Yalensis
Hoc Saxum Ponendum
Curavit.

ANALYSIS OF THE WORK.

SYSTEM OF DOCTRINES.

	Sermon.
A. Doctrines of Natural Religion.	
a. Existence of God;	
I. Direct Proofs of it. Mark xii. 32.	1
II. Atheistical Objections and Schemes of Doctrine considered. Ps. xiv. 1.	2
III. Comparative Influence of Atheism and Christianity. Ps. xiv. 1.	3
b. Unity of God. 1 Cor. viii. 4.	4
c. Attributes of God;	
I. Eternity, *II.* Immutability, Ps. cii. 24—27.	5
III. Omnipresence, *IV.* Omniscience, Ps. cxxxix. 1—12.	6
V. Omnipotence, *VI.* Independence, Gen. xvii. 1.	7
VII. Benevolence;	
I. As proved by the Works of Creation and Providence. 1 John iv. 8.	8
II. As exhibited by Revelation. 1 John iv. 8.	9
VIII. Justice. Deut. xxxii. 4.	10
IX. Truth. Psalm cxvii. 2.	11
X. Mercy. Psalm ciii. 8.	12
XI. Wisdom. 1 Tim. i. 17.	13
d. Decrees of God. Job xxiii. 13.	14, 15
e. Sovereignty of God. Jer. x. 23.	16
f. Works of God;	
I. Of Creation,	
I. Heaven,	
i. Air, ii. Starry Heaven, iii. Supreme Heaven,	17
iv. Holy Angels;	
i. Their Rank, ii. Their Attributes, iii. Their Employments, Col. i. 16.	18, 19
v. Fallen Angels. Jude 6.	20
II. Earth;	
i. The Globe itself. Gen. i. 1.	21

. . . . . II. Man;
. . . . . i. Body,
. . . . . ii. Soul, } Gen. i. 26, 27. - 22
. . . . . 1. Its Nature,
. . . . . 2. Soul not Material. Gen. ii. 7. 23
. . . . . 3. Soul not a chain of Ideas and Exercises. Gen. ii. 7. 24
. . . . . iii. Chief End of Man. 1 Cor. x. 31. 25
. . . *II.* Of Providence;
. . . . I. Probation of Man. Gen. ii. 15—17. - 26
. . . . II. Temptation, } Gen. iii. 1—6. - - 27
. . . . III. Fall, }
. . . . IV. Sentence. Gen. iii. 14—19. - - 28
. . . . V. Depravity of Man;
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SYSTEM

OF

DIVINITY.

SERMON I.

EXISTENCE OF GOD.

MARK xii. 32.—*There is one God.*

THE existence of GOD is the basis of religion. This truth will be evident, if we remember, that the word *religion* always denotes *either a system of truths, of which* GOD *is the great subject; or a system of affections and conduct, of which* HE *is the supreme object.* If we can prove to ourselves the existence of a GOD; that is, of a Being, by whom we were created, and by whom the universe is governed; some such system of truths, affections, and conduct, must be also capable of being proved. To such a Being we and the universe must sustain important relations; and out of these relations, must necessarily arise to intelligent beings a variety of duties, immediately, and alway owed to him. Were there no such Being, there could be no such relations nor duties. Were the existence of such a Being incapable of proof, the existence of the relations and duties would be equally incapable of being proved. Happily for us, and accordantly with his own wisdom, GOD has not, in this most interesting case, *left himself without* ample *witness.*

In the text, the existence of GOD is declared, in the plainest and most direct terms. I shall, therefore, proceed immediately to the examination of the subject.

The foundation of all reasoning, concerning beings and events, and ultimately, concerning attributes and relations also, *is a supposed, or acknowledged, connexion between cause and effect.* By cause, (it will be observed, that I am speaking of what is called *the efficient cause*) I intend, *that something*, be it what it may, *which produces, or is supposed to produce, existence, or any change of existence; and without which, the existence, or the change, would not have been.* Between this something styled cause, and the something styled effect, all mankind, except a few sceptical or atheistical philosophers, have agreed, that there is an inseparable connexion. As this connexion has been denied by these philosophers, and as it is the foundation of all our reasonings on this, and every other subject; a consideration of it, and of the evidence which attends it, will undoubtedly be a proper part of the present discourse.

In the first place, it will be admitted by these philosophers, as well as all other men, that we have no knowledge of any existence, or any change, which has taken place without a cause. All beings, and all

events, so far as our acquaintance with them has hitherto extended, have been produced by some agency, or influence, extraneous to themselves, and have never sprung up into existence casually, or without such agency, or influence. There is, therefore, not the least reason furnished by experience, or by any thing which we know, why we should believe existence to be casual; or why we should doubt an inseparable connexion between cause and effect. On the contrary, all the experience, all the knowledge of man, lends its whole influence to the doctrine, that existence has been invariably caused. The supposition, therefore, that existence is uncaused, or that the connexion between cause and effect is not inseparable and invariable, is perfectly gratuitous, and without a shadow of support. How absurd and ridiculous it is, for a man, professing to be a reasoner and a philosopher, to found his opinions, or his arguments, in any case, and especially in the most important case possible, on a mere supposition, I need not explain.

2dly. *All mankind have acknowledged, in the clearest manner, and in every way of which the subject was susceptible, the inseparable nature of this connexion.*

The language of every nation is formed only on this plan. In every language, there are not only many words directly expressing ideas of this subject; such as cause, efficiency, effect, production, produce, effectuate, create, generate, &c. or words equivalent to these; but every *verb in every language, except the intransitive impersonal verbs, and the verb substantive, involves, of course, causation or efficiency; and refers always to an agent, or cause, in such a manner, that, without the operation of this cause or agent, the verb would have no meaning.* In this manner have mankind declared, in the very structure of their languages, not only that they perceived, and acknowledged this connexion, but that it formed so considerable and essential a part of their thoughts, as to necessitate them to think in this manner only. Thus, *to think, to speak, to sit, to run, to strike, to write, to love, to hate*, all denote effects, and refer to an agent, or cause of those effects; and without such reference, would not contain, nor express, any meaning whatever.

I have observed above, that all mankind have agreed in the acknowledgment of this connexion, except a few atheistical and sceptical philosophers. These men have, indeed, denied this connexion *in form;* but they have acknowledged it, as fully as all others, *in their customary language.* On every subject, except creation, or giving existence, they have spoken exactly as other men speak; and the connexion between cause and effect, is as often declared in their conversation and writings, and as much relied on, as in those of other men. This fact is clear proof, that they admit this connexion in all cases, except those which respect the existence and government of God, in the same manner as the rest of mankind. In truth, language is so constructed, that it is impossible to write, or speak, in a different manner.

Children, so soon as they begin to speak at all, inquire more anxiously, and more universally, concerning causation and efficiency, than concerning any other subject of investigation. Every one, conversant with them, must have observed, that they almost continually inquire, who did this, that, and the other thing; or produced the several changes, of which they are witnesses? Who made themselves, and the various objects around them? In this manner, they teach us, that this is, to man, the natural and the only natural mode of conceiving: for all children think and speak in this manner.

Nor, are the views of mankind less forcibly evident concerning this subject, *in their actions*. No man ever acted, without regarding himself as a cause; and without expecting to produce some change in himself, or in the objects around him, by his efficiency; nor made use of any instrument, without expecting from it a degree of efficacy, which should produce some change, or other, not to be looked for without it. Thus, *all men* eat and drink; lie down, and act, universally, with a design to effectuate certain changes in themselves, or other objects: and *atheists*, as truly, and uniformly, as any other men. Thus, also, *children* act, from the beginning. Indeed, were men not to act in this manner, they would never act at all. No proof of absolute and universal conviction, concerning this, or any other subject, can be more perfect.

3dly. *We learn this connexion from experience; and in two ways; by the testimony of our senses, and by the inspection of our minds.*

Causes operate *without us, and within us;* and produce their proper effects in both cases. Those which operate *without us*, produce their effects *before our senses;* and so far our knowledge of the connexion between cause and effect, *arises from sensitive testimony*. Those which operate *within us*, produce their effects *before the eye of the mind only;* and so far our knowledge of this connexion is *intuitive*. I as clearly perceive, that *I think, reflect, remember, choose, wish, love, and hate;* that by a determination of my will, *I turn my thoughts from one subject to another; and transfer my affections and my conduct, voluntarily, from one object to another, and from one course to another;* as, *that I exist*. I also perceive *this in the same manner, and with the same certainty;* viz. *with the bare inspection of the mental eye;* commonly termed, *intuition*, and acknowledged to be attended with *the highest possible certainty*. Mr. Hume is, therefore, totally erroneous in his assertion, that *the connexion between cause and effect exists*, or rather *is perceived, only in the names;* and that, *if we would call both by the name, events*, we should not suppose any connexion to exist between them.

This opinion is sufficiently refuted by *the fact, that these names, and not that of events, have been given to them*. Mankind never give names without ideas; nor form any names, which do not express such ideas, as they really have; nor suppose themselves to

have ideas, which they have not; or different ideas from those, which they really have. Wherever names have been given, the very ideas, which they denote, have certainly existed in the minds of those, by whom they were given.

The thing which we really perceive in this case, is, however, *merely the fact, that cause and effect are thus connected; and not the nature of the causation, or efficiency*, on which the connexion is founded. That *I, and not something else, think, and act*, in such manners as have been recited, and that but for me the thought and action would not have existed, I perceive intuitively; but I do not perceive at all *why, or by what power, I think, and act. The nature of this subject* lies, in every case, beyond the bounds of the human capacity. Yet this infers not, in any degree, any want of evidence, attending the fact. The contrary opinion would be attended with this absurdity: *that we cannot perceive one thing without perceiving at the same time another, totally diverse, and, in the view of the mind, entirely separated:* an absurdity which cannot need to be exposed by me.

4thly. *The mind cannot realize the fact, that existence, or change, can take place without a cause.*

This is, at least, true with respect *to my own mind.* I have very often made the attempt, and with no small pains-taking, but have never been able to succeed at all. Supposing other minds to have the same general nature with my own, I conclude, that all others will find the same want of success. If nothing had originally existed, I cannot possibly realize, that any thing could ever have existed. *Causes, absolutely the same, must, in the same circumstances, produce absolutely the same effects.* This is, I think, certainly *self-evident*, and admitted as such. *An absolute want of cause* involves *an absolute sameness of an opposite kind;* and must, with nearly the same evidence, continue for ever. The necessity of causes to all the *changes of being* is, so far as I know, universally admitted. *Mr. Hume*, particularly, talks as commonly, or rather as uniformly, in this manner, as any Christian does; and not only argues from cause to effect, and from effect to cause, as much as other men, but *discusses* this subject abundantly, and gives directions, and principles, for this kind of argumentation. Indeed, without admitting it, neither he, nor any other man, could argue at all. But, if *no change* can take place without a cause, how can it be supposed, that existence can take place without a cause? Certainly less violence is done to our reason by supposing a being to be *changed* in some respect or circumstance without a cause, than to *begin to exist* without a cause.

5thly. *No absurdity can be greater than to argue with a man who denies this connexion.*

He himself, *in speaking*, exhibits himself as the cause of all the words uttered by him, and the opinions communicated; and, in the *act of arguing*, admits you to be a similar cause. If his body be

not a cause, and your eyes another, you cannot see him. If his voice, and your ear, be not causes, you cannot hear him. If *his* mind and *yours*, be not causes, you cannot understand him. In a word, without admitting the connexion between cause and effect, you can never know that *he* is arguing with *you*, or *you* with *him*.

With these observations premised, which you will see to be inwoven with this and all other subjects of discussion, I observe, in the first place, *that the existence of things, universally, proves the being of* GOD.

The argument which leads to this conclusion is, for substance, conducted by *Mr. Locke* in the following manner: Every man knows, with absolute certainty, that he himself exists. He knows, also, that he did not always exist, but began to be. It is clearly certain to him, that his existence was caused, and not casual; and was produced by a cause, adequate to the production. By an adequate cause, is invariably intended, a cause possessing and exerting an efficacy sufficient to bring any effect to pass. In the present case, an adequate cause is one possessing and exerting all the understanding necessary to contrive, and the power necessary to create, such a being as the man in question. This cause is what we are accustomed to call GOD. The understanding necessary to contrive, and the power necessary to create, a being compounded of the human soul and body, admit of no limits. He who can contrive and create such a being, can contrive and create any thing. He who actually contrived and created man, certainly contrived and created all things.

This argument is, in my view, perfectly conclusive: nor has it been, nor will it ever be, answered, except with sophistry, or sneers. I will not insist, that every step of it is attended with what logicians call *intuitive evidence:* nor, that it amounts to what is, in the logical sense, an *absolute demonstration*. But it is, in every step, attended with such evidence as excludes all rational doubt; and approaches so near to the character of demonstration as to leave the mind completely satisfied. At the same time, it is opposed by no counter evidence.

2dly. *The state of existing things completely proves the being of* GOD.

The manner in which the argument, derived from this source, is conducted by *Bishop Berkeley*, is clearer, and more happy, than any other within my knowledge; and is substantially the following:

We acknowledge the existence of each other to be unquestionable; and, when called upon for the evidence, on which this acknowledgment is founded, allege that of our senses; yet it can by no means be affirmed with truth, that our senses discern, immediately, any man. We see, indeed, a form; and the motions and actions of that form; and we hear a voice, communicating to us the thoughts, emotions, and volitions, of an intelligent being. Yet it is

intuitively certain, that neither the form, the motions, the actions, the voice, the thoughts, nor the volitions, are that intelligent being; or *the living, acting, thinking thing*, which we call *man*. On the contrary, they are merely effects, of which that living, acting thing, denoted by the word man, is the cause. The existence of the cause, or, in other language, of the man, we conclude from the effects, which he thus produces. In the same manner, and with the like certainty, we discover the existence of God. In the universe without us, and in the little world within us, we perceive a great variety of effects, produced by some cause, adequate to the production. Thus the motions of the heart, arteries, veins, and other vessels; of the blood and other juices; of the tongue, the hands, and other members; the perception of the senses, and the actions of the mind; the storm, the lightning, the volcano, and the earthquake; the reviviscence and growth of the vegetable world; the diffusion of light, and the motions of the planetary system, are all effects; and effects of a cause, adequate to the production. This cause is God; or a being, possessed of intelligence and power, sufficient to contrive and bring them to pass. He, with evidence from reason, equally clear with the testimony of the Scriptures, *thundered marvellously with his voice; holdeth the winds in his fists; sendeth lightnings with rain; looketh on the earth, and it trembleth; toucheth the hills, and they smoke; melteth the mountains like wax, at his presence; causeth the outgoings of the morning and the evening to rejoice; and maketh his sun to arise on the evil and the good.* Him, also, we are bound *to praise, because we are fearfully and wonderfully made* by him; *our substance was not hid from him, when we were made in secret. His eyes saw our substance, yet being imperfect, and in his book all our members were written, which in continuance, were fashioned by him, when as yet there were none of them. He also breathed into our nostrils the breath of life; and the inspiration of the Almighty hath given us understanding.*

Should it be said, *that these things are the natural and necessary result of certain inherent powers of matter and mind, and therefore demand no extrinsic agency;* I answer, that this objection affects the conclusion, only by removing it one step farther back in the course of reasoning. That matter should have possessed these powers eternally, without exerting them, is impossible; and that it should have exerted them from eternity is equally impossible. As I cannot enter into the consideration of these two positions at the present time; as I intend soon to resume it, and believe, that I shall be able to demonstrate both of them; I shall, for the present only, take them for granted. If they are true, it follows irresistibly, from both of them united, that *the properties* and *the exertions, of matter, are derived from an extrinsic cause; and that that cause is possessed of intelligence and power, to which no bounds can be assigned.*

The same argument, conducted in a more general and popular manner, may be thus exhibited. The agency of God is clearly

and certainly seen in the preservation and government of all things. The existence of all the forms and states of being, which we behold in the universe, is plainly derived; because it is a change in the former state of things, commencing, continuing, and terminating; and, as it is impossible that any being should commence its own existence, derived certainly from an extrinsic and adequate cause. This cause can be no other than God.

Thus the production, existence, and structure, of vegetables and animals; their growth, perfection, and decay; their functions and operations; are all plainly effects of boundless intelligence and power. The universe, of which we are inhabitants, is plainly a system, made up of parts, fitted to each other, and arranged and proportioned, so as to make one great and glorious whole. The parts also, are, to say the least, in immense multitudes, subordinate, but wonderful systems.

To pass by *the mineral kingdom*, in which, however, there are innumerable proofs of design, art, and arrangement, fitting the parts of it, by a happy subserviency, to the accomplishment of many illustrious and valuable ends, but demanding more time than can be allotted, at present, to the consideration of them; I observe, that every *organized being, every vegetable and every animal*, is a complete system within itself. Each has all the parts and faculties which are suited to the purposes of its existence, purposes obvious, useful, and wonderful; and yet regularly and completely accomplished. Thus grass is exactly fitted to adorn the earth with beauty, and to become food for the sustenance of an innumerable multitude of animals. Thus hortulan productions, fruits, grains, and various kinds of animals, are fitted to become food for mankind. Thus trees are fitted to yield their shade, and to become useful materials for furniture, fencing, and building. Thus the earth, the air, the rain, and the sunshine, are suited to the production of vegetable life, of action, warmth, and comfort; together with innumerable other things, necessary to preserve and invigorate man. Thus the sun is fitted to shine; the planets to receive light from his beams; and the whole system, to move on with regularity and harmony, and to accomplish all the great and glorious purposes for which it was contrived.

In every one of these things, even the least of them, there is a skill and power manifested, which, were any other skill and power employed in labouring to bring them to pass, infinitely transcend the efficiency of all beings, except God. In every one of them, and in all parts of every one, *He* is seen in this efficiency, and is therefore present in all. In all, and throughout all, he acts. Every moment, in every place, and with respect to every being, he preserves, conducts, and manages, all the parts of this stupendous machine, this vast universe, this immense kingdom, which he *hath made for himself, and not for another*. Power and skill, literally infinite, are every moment conspicuous in every being

This mode of arguing is so natural to man, that we find it adopted by the most ignorant nations, as well as the most enlightened; by the child, as well as the man of gray hairs. In every age, and in every country, it has struck the mind with a force so great, and in a manner so satisfactory, that it has probably precluded, in most minds, the apprehension of any necessity for further investigation. Ask any plain man, whom you meet, why he believes, that there is a God; even *the poor Indian, whose mind*, in the language of the poet, is wholly "untutored," and he will tell you, that *he sees him in the clouds, and hears him in the wind.* All men believe the things around them to be effects, or works; and all believe them to be the works of a God; of a being, whose power and understanding transcend all limits. Nor has any man ever doubted the soundness of this conclusion, but under the influence of a wish, that it might not be true, nor without a *laborious effort* to convince himself, that it was an error. So true is it that *the fool*, and the fool only, *hath said in his heart, "There is no God."*

The arguments, which *Atheists* have employed against this doctrine, so far as they are of sufficient importance to merit an answer, I propose to consider hereafter; and will conclude this discourse with the following

REMARKS.

1st. *How great, awful, and glorious, a being is God!*

From the things, which have been said, it is evident, that there is, ever has been, and ever will be, a Being, from whom all things derived their existence; on whom all depend for their continuance: and by whom all are conducted in the order and harmony, visible in the universe. Of what character does this exhibition declare him to be possessed?

He is plainly *self-existent.* All other beings are derived, and begin to be. He only is underived, and *without beginning of days, or end of years; the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.* Of course, his manner of being is wholly unlike that of all creatures; totally superior, and utterly incomprehensible. Hence he says, and says truly, *I am; and there is none beside me.* Hence he styles himself, I AM THAT I AM, JAH, and JEHOVAH; that is, EXISTENCE, to which there is nothing like, and nothing second.

Plainly also, he is *Almighty.* The power, which gave existence, is power, which can know no limits. But to all beings in heaven, and earth, and hell, he gave existence, and is therefore seen to possess power which transcends every bound. The power, which upholds, moves, and rules the universe, is also clearly illimitable. The power, which is necessary to move a single world, transcends all finite understanding. No definite number of finite beings possess sufficient power to move a single world a hair's breadth; yet God moves the great world, which we inhabit, 68,000 miles in an hour—two hundred and sixty times faster than the

swiftest motion of a cannon ball. Nor does he move this world only, but the whole system, of which it is a part; and all the worlds, which replenish the immense stellary system, formed of suns innumerable, and of the planets which surround them. All these he has also moved from the beginning to the present moment; and *yet he fainteth not, neither is weary.*

Nor is this a full description of his amazing agency. He works every moment in every part of this vast whole; moves every atom; expands every leaf; finishes every blade of grass; erects every tree; conducts every particle of vapour, every drop of rain, and every flake of snow; guides every ray of light; breathes in every wind; thunders in every storm; wings the lightning; pours the streams and rivers; empties the volcano; heaves the ocean; and shakes the globe. In the universe of minds, he formed, he preserves, he animates, and he directs, all the mysterious and wonderful powers of knowledge, virtue, and moral action, which fill up the infinite extent of his immense and eternal empire. In his contrivance of these things, their attributes, and their operations, is seen a stupendous display of his immeasurable knowledge and wisdom. All these existed in the Immense Eternal Mind, as in a vast storehouse of glorious ideas and designs; and existed from everlasting. In them the endlessly diversified character of uncreated wisdom, beauty, and greatness, has begun to be manifested, and will continue to be manifested, with increasing splendour, for ever.

What, we cannot but ask, must be the *Knowledge* of him, from whom all created minds have derived both their power of knowing, and the innumerable objects of their knowledge? What must be the *Wisdom* of him, from whom all things derive their wisdom; from whom the emmet, the bee, and the stork, receive the skill to provide, without an error, their food, habitation, and safety; and the prophet and the seraph, imbibe their exalted views of the innumerable, vast, and sublime wonders of creation, and of creating glory and greatness? What must be the *Excellence* of him who gives birth to all other Excellence; and will improve, refine, and exalt, that Excellence in every virtuous mind, throughout ages which will begin for ever?

2dly. *How plainly are all beings absolutely dependent on God for their existence, their attributes, and their operations!*

All beings *are* just what he pleases, and *can do* what he pleases, and permits, and nothing more. Should he *command the clouds that they should not rain;* how soon would the vegetable and animal worlds perish; and man accompany his kindred worms to the dust? Should he withhold any power, it must cease to be exercised; and we could neither speak, think, nor move: the human race would be changed into statues; and the world be a dreary waste; a desert of solitude, silence, and despair.

How vain, then, must be all resistance to God! The very power

to resist, the will, the wish, cannot rise into being, unless supplied, and supported, by him. The universe of men and angels, the worlds above and beneath, united, could not contend against him for a moment. All are *nothing and less than nothing*, in his sight. With a word he called the whole into being. With infinite ease he could, with a word, return the whole to its original nothing; and with another word, could raise up a second universe in its stead.

3dly. *Of this universe God must, of necessity, be the sole and absolute proprietor.*

No property is so perfect, as that which arises from creation. Whatever *we* make, or fashion, is *our* property, in the highest degree in which any thing can be *ours*. God, it is to be remembered, not only made, but created; not only made the work, but the materials. Hence his property is plainly superior and paramount to all other; and he is a proprietor in a higher sense than any other being can be. His property, also, extends to all beings animate and inanimate, rational and irrational, to atoms, vegetables, animals, men, and angels, in the same absolute manner.

Hence it is evident, that he has an absolute right to dispose of all beings as he pleases; and particularly to require, on the most reasonable grounds, that all rational beings voluntarily devote themselves to his service, with such affections, in such a manner, and with such conduct, as are conformed to his will. This right is complete and supreme, and cannot be denied, nor questioned, without sin; without plain and palpable injustice. All disobedience to his pleasure is evidently unjust, in the same manner, as when we withhold the property of our fellow-men, and in a degree incalculably greater; while obedience, on the other hand, is nothing more than barely *rendering to God the things which are God's.*

4thly. *Of the same universe he is, of course, the only Ruler.*

The nature of this vast work, and the wisdom and power displayed in it, prove, beyond debate, that it was made for some end suited to the greatness and number of the means which are employed. This end is such, and so important, that it was proper for him to create and uphold an universe for its accomplishment. This end, originally so valuable as to induce him to commence and continue this mighty work, must ever be equally valuable in his view. But it can never be accomplished, except by his own government of all things. No other being can govern them at all. All created power, wisdom, and goodness, is infinitely unequal to such a task, even for one day, or one moment. But *He* can rule the work for ever, and with infinite ease; and can, and will thus accomplish the end which he proposed from everlasting.

For this end, every thing was created—the least as truly as the greatest; the atom, as the world; the worm, as the angel. His providence therefore extends, with absolute evidence, to all. Each, however minute, however momentary, is really necessary in its place, and for its time. Each, therefore, needs to be conducted,

throughout its existence, to the purpose for which it was made. His care extends, therefore, and must extend, to minims, ephemera, and atoms, as truly, and as exactly, as to the concerns of cherubs and seraphs in the heavens.

Accordingly, we actually behold him alike animating the blade, the stem, and the leaf, in the vegetable kingdom; living in the mite and the insect, the bird and the beast; *thundering marvellously with his voice; sending lightnings with rain;* rolling the billows of the ocean; making the *earth to quake at his presence;* shining in the stars, glowing in the sun, and moving with his hand the various worlds which compose the universe. At the same time, his presence and agency are more sublimely visible in the universe of minds, in all the amazing powers of thought, affection, and moral action, in the knowledge, virtue, and enjoyment, of the myriads which form the peculiar kingdom of JEHOVAH.

5thly. *It is equally evident that this end must be Himself.*

Before God made the universe, there was nothing beside him. Whatever motive prompted him to this great work, must, of course, have been found in himself; because, beside him there was nothing. It must, also, have been found in himself, because, when other beings existed, all were nothing in comparison with him; and, therefore, in the same comparison, undeserving of his regard. But this end could not respect any change in himself; any increase, diminution, or alteration, of his greatness, power, and glory. It was, therefore, the manifestation of himself alone which could be the end of this mighty work. Himself is the sum of excellence; of all that is great, or wise, or good. The manifestation of himself is, therefore, only the manifestation of boundless excellence to the creatures which he has made. The manifestation of all attributes, though capable of being made in *declarations*, is principally discerned in *actions*. Excellence, therefore, is discovered, chiefly, by doing what is great, and wise, and good. All this is so evident, as to need no illustration.

God, when he intended to disclose his perfections to the universe, intended, therefore, to exhibit them, chiefly, by an endless course of action, in which wisdom, greatness, and goodness, should be supremely, and most clearly, discovered. The highest blessedness, he has told us, and therefore the greatest glory, is found in communicating good, and not in gaining it; in *giving*, and not in *receiving*. To this decision Reason necessarily subjoins her own Amen. The great design of God in all things is, therefore, to do good, boundlessly, and for ever; and in this conduct to disclose himself, as the boundless and eternal good.

It must, of necessary consequence, be supremely pleasing to him, that his intelligent creatures voluntarily unite with him, in loving, and promoting, this divine purpose; while all opposition to it must be supremely displeasing. How important then must it be to us, that we cheerfully coincide with his perfect pleasure

in this great end, and devote to the advancement of it all our faculties. Should we resist his designs, so excellent, so dear to him; how unworthy in itself, and provoking to him, must be the conduct. What terrible consequences must spring from the exertion of such power and knowledge, exerted to manifest his anger against those who thus disobey his will, and oppose his designs! What must they not feel! What ought they not to fear!

On the contrary, what an universe of good, immense and endless, may he be expected to provide for those, who voluntarily unite with him in this glorious design, and cheerfully perform his pleasure. Such good he can make, and give, and repeat for ever, with a wish, and with a word. To make, and give it, is his delight and glory. It will, therefore, be done. In this wonderful work, how divinely great and good does God appear! How deserving of all admiration, love, homage, obedience, and praise. How amazing the wonders, which he has done! How much more amazing the transcendent purpose, for which they were done! Who would not fear, who would not bless, who would not adore, *that glorious and fearful name*, JEHOVAH OUR GOD; the Being self-existent, eternal, and immense; and without beginning, limits, or end; united with eternal and immeasurable wisdom and power; from whom are derived all worlds, and all their inhabitants; on whom all depend; and by whom all are preserved, governed, and blessed, and conducted with supreme wisdom and goodness to an end, immortal and divine? *Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.*

SERMON II.

ATHEISTICAL OBJECTIONS AND SCHEMES OF DOCTRINE CONSIDERED.

PSALM xiv. 1.—*The fool hath said in his heart, there is no* GOD.

IN the preceding discourse, I endeavoured to prove the existence of GOD by arguments which have appeared to men of great distinction for learning and wisdom, to be not only satisfactory, but unanswerable. Plain men, also, though comprehending them imperfectly, have admitted both the force of the arguments themselves; and the point which they are intended to establish; without a question, and almost without an exception. Yet it cannot be denied that there have been atheists, speculative as well as practical. A few of them may have existed in the uneducated classes of mankind, but almost all have been found among those who, professedly at least, have been more or less learned.

But to whatever class these persons may belong, and whatever pretensions they may make to knowledge and wisdom, they are in the text universally characterized by folly. The fool, says David, hath said, there is no GOD. In other words, every man who says this, is a fool; and the assertion is the result of his folly only.

It is remarkable that this assertion is declared to be made in the *heart* of the fool; that is, to flow from his wishes, and not from his understanding. For the words, *there is*, in the translation, there is nothing in the original. Hence, it has been supposed by some commentators, that the passage ought to be rendered, *let there be no* GOD. Whether this rendering be admitted, or not, there can be no doubt that the chief reason why the assertion is adopted at all, is the indisposition of the heart to acknowledge the existence of the Creator.

That we easily believe what we wish to believe, is a truth so obvious, as to have passed into a proverb. He who hates the control, disreslishes the character, and dreads the inspection, judgment, and retribution of his Maker, and intends to persevere in a course of sin; will find no refuge from anxiety and alarm, and no source of quiet in sinning so comfortable, or in his view so safe, as the belief, that there is no GOD. It is not strange, therefore, that this belief has been cherished by such beings as mankind are; and particularly by such beings as atheists have universally been.

Still, this conduct cannot be denied to be folly of a very gross kind. As our belief can make no difference in the fact; as if GOD exists, he will continue to exist; as our danger from his anger against our sins, is exactly the same whether we believe it or not; as our quiet in sin will in this case only cheat us into ruin; and as

the little consolation which we find in the indulgence of this belief, will only enhance our wretchedness by adding to it the anguish of disappointment; no sober man will hesitate to pronounce this conduct foolish in the extreme. To him, who walks over the edge of a precipice, what benefit can it be to shut his eyes? What greater stupidity can there be, than to shut our eyes, when this conduct will prove the certain means of conveying us to this scene of absolute destruction?

Atheists have, however, determined to encounter this hazard, and boldly resolved that there is no GOD. Against the doctrine of the divine existence they have raised up several objections, which they declare to be satisfactory, at least, to themselves. These they have also formed into a scheme, and presented it to the public with a face of bold assurance. Even this has not satisfied them. They have triumphed, in the most open manner, in the supposed ingenuity of their efforts; and in the boasted strength of their arguments, have ridiculed the arguments of their antagonists; and have treated the doctrines not only of Christianity, but even of Theism, with contempt. It is the design of this discourse, to examine the objections of these men, and the principal doctrines with which they have been connected.

The first of these objections which I shall mention, is that *Creation is so great a work, as to make it seem impossible, even for God to accomplish it.*

This was the great difficulty in the mind of *Aristotle*. This singular man, in the early parts of his life, found his thoughts so much perplexed with this consideration, that he for a time gave up the doctrine of creation, and determined that the universe, as to its substance at least, had existed from eternity. I cannot help remarking here the difference between him and the modern opposers of the divinity of Christ. *Arians and Socinians* have very generally insisted, that creation is so easy a work, as to afford no proof of divine agency; and declared, that, even if Christ did in fact create all things, this fact does not infer his divinity. To *Aristotle* it appeared too difficult a work, even for God himself to perform.

To this objection we are furnished with a conclusive answer. *God does actually, and daily, create the human soul* in innumerable instances; and the creation of the soul evidently demands all the power, necessary to the creation of matter. He who can give existence to the soul, can plainly give existence to any thing. As I propose in the progress of these discourses to discuss at large the immateriality of the soul, I shall at present take it for granted.

This objection is also completely overthrown by the fact, that *God upholds, moves, and governs the universe*. Had *Aristotle* known the doctrines of the Copernican astronomy, and beheld God moving with entire and unabated ease, the systems of worlds, which compose the universe; his capacious mind would, I think, have been irresistibly led to admit, that the hand which moves them, could with

the same ease have created them. Indeed this great man appears, in the later parts of his life, not to have placed any serious reliance on this objection.

2dly. *It is objected, that the state of the world is such, as to forbid the belief, that it is the work of a God.*

"The world," says the objectors, "is full of imperfection, and of suffering. The course of nature is such, as to entail upon all its animated inhabitants, pain, disease, and death. Nor is the moral state of things materially different from the natural. Depravity, in all its odious forms, appears to have existed from the beginning; and has ever constituted, to say the least, no small part of the character of mankind." God, on the part of all enlightened men, who believe in the existence of such a being, and particularly on that of Christians, is declared to be possessed of infinite perfection. Can a being of such perfection be supposed to be the author of so imperfect, incongruous, and deformed a work? Is it not plain, that God either did not make the world, or that he has forgotten it, and left it wholly to the control of chance?

To this objection, which is attended with a degree of speciousness, and fitted to awaken fretfulness, where it will not produce conviction, I answer, in the

1st. place, *that all the real weight of it lies in the existence of moral evil; a subject, which I shall have occasion to examine, when I come to discourse on the benevolence of God, and on the apostacy of man.*

2dly. *The whole force of this objection lies in the inexplicableness of certain things which it alleges; and amounts to no more than this, that there are several things in the world, the nature, use, and end, of which we cannot understand.* The argument contained in it, if resolved into a general principle, will stand thus. Nothing, the nature, use, and end, of which we cannot understand, can be the work of God. This argument needs only to be proposed, to be exploded; for it is absolutely certain, that God can do very few things, whose nature, use, or end, can be comprehended by us. It is equally certain, that, according to this rule of concluding, the same thing may, at the same time, be proved to be, and not to be, the work of God. One man may distinctly comprehend the nature of a thing, and discern in it certain proofs of divine workmanship. Another man may, at the same time, be wholly ignorant of the nature of the same thing; and his ignorance will, according to this rule, be decisive proof, that it is not a divine work. The same man, also, may, according to this rule, in the different periods of childhood and manhood, be able to prove a thing to be, and not to be, wrought by the hand of God. The evidence of the divine agency, and the want of it, are here placed, not in the nature of the work, but in the nature of the optics by which it is perceived: an absurdity too palpable to need any further discussion. The real proof in this, and every other case, must, if it be found at all, be found in some-

thing which we know, and not in our ignorance. But it has not been, and cannot be shown, that in the existing world there is any thing inconsistent with the doctrine, that it was created, and is governed by God. It is readily acknowledged, that in the system of which we are a little part, mystery and inexplicableness are found every where, and in every thing, in the view of such minds as ours. At the same time, it is also certain, that nothing else can be rationally looked for in the works of Him, *whose ways are higher than our ways as the Heavens are higher than the earth.* The mysteries alleged, instead of being an objection against the doctrine, that the world was made by God, are a strong presumptive argument in its favour.

3dly. *The direct proof of the divine agency in the formation and government of this very world, found in innumerable things which itself contains, is hitherto unanswered, and is plainly unanswerable.* This, having its foundation in what we know, can never be affected in any manner by what we do not know; or, in other words, by the mere inexplicableness of the objects around us.

Universally, until we know thoroughly the nature, use, and end of the things, on which the objection is founded, it must be a mere and miserable presumption, that they have not such a nature, use, and end, as are worthy of God.

The Doctrines which Atheists have connected with these objections, and which are deserving of any serious attention, are the following:

I. *That things have existed in an eternal series:*

II. *That their existence is Casual:* and

III. *That all distinct, or separate beings, owe their existence to the Powers and Operations of matter.*

These I shall consider in the order specified.

I. *It is asserted by Atheists, that there has been an Eternal Series of things.*

The absurdity of this assertion may be shown in many ways.

1st. *Each individual in a series is an unit. But every collection of units, however great, is with intuitive certainty, numerable; and therefore cannot be infinite.*

2dly. *Every individual in the series, (take for example, a series of men) had a beginning. But a collection of beings, each of which had a beginning, must, however long the series, have also had a beginning.* This likewise, is intuitively evident. Should it be said, that the first in each series had not a beginning, but was from everlasting; which is the only possible method of evading the answer already given; I reply, that, according to this supposition, the first in each series was uncaused and self-existent; and, containing in itself the principles of eternal existence, could never have ceased to be. At the same time, an endless multitude of finite self-existent beings must be admitted on this supposition, possessed in all instances of few and feeble active powers, and in most instances of none but

such as are merely passive. Thus, for example, there must have been an eternal Man, an eternal Lion, an eternal Eagle, an eternal Oak, an eternal Rose, eternal Grass; and in a word, as many eternal self-existent Beings, as there are kinds, and sorts of existences in the world: for no being of one kind can possibly produce, or bring into existence, a being of any other kind. Of course, there must have been *one*, eternal and self-existent, at the head of every existing series; and at the head of every series of animated beings, an eternal self-existent *pair*. From these, also, the whole series must have sprung without any contrivance, and in most instances, without any consciousness. All this, with a train of absurdities following it, literally endless, must be admitted on this supposition. For what purpose must all this be admitted? Truly, to relieve us from the difficulty of admitting the existence of One self-existent being. At the same time, the existence of such a finite self-existent being is a mere hypothesis, without a shadow of support.

Beyond this, all such beings must have lived, as we do, through a succession of years, and their whole existence must be made up of parts, or divisions, succeeding each other. These parts are a collection of units; and are therefore numerable.

Should it be said, that saints and angels in heaven are immortal, and will therefore exist through an infinite duration; that this duration will also be made up of successive parts; and that, of course, there may be an infinite duration made of successive parts: I answer, that there is a total difference between these cases. In the former, the supposed infinite duration is completed: in the latter, it will never be completed. It is true, that saints and angels will never cease to be: but it will never be true, that they have lived infinitely, or through an infinite duration. An endless addition of parts may be supposed; but an infinite sum of parts, which have actually had existence, is a self-contradiction.

3dly. *It is justly observed by the learned and acute Dr. Bentley, that, in the supposed infinite series, as the number of individual men is alleged to be infinite; the number of their eyes must be twice, the number of their fingers ten times, and the number of the hairs on their heads many thousand times, as great as the number of men.* What, then, must be the number of the hairs on the bodies of animals; of leaves on the trees; and of blades of grass on the earth? According to this supposition, then, there is an almost endless multitude of numbers, greater, and many of them incalculably, than an infinite number. To such palpable absurdities are we reduced by supposing an infinite succession.

4thly. *It is also observed by the same excellent Writer, that all these generations of men were once present.* One of the individuals, viz. the first, existed at an infinite distance from us. His son, who may be supposed to have been forty years younger, was either at an infinite, or at a finite distance from us. If at an infinite, then

the infinite distance of his father was forty years longer than the infinite distance of the son. If the son was at a finite distance from us, then forty years, added to a finite distance, will make it infinite.

It is unnecessary, that I should dwell any longer on this complication of folly.

The same arguments are, with the same force, applicable to all possible successions. Every succession is in its nature made up of parts, each of which has a beginning. Of course we see intuitively, that the whole has had a beginning.

The only subject, on which rests even a seeming obscurity in this respect, is what is called *continued motion*. Some persons have considered motion of this kind; such, for example, as that of the planets, as not being successive; because, when viewed in the gross, the successive parts were not separable by the human mind. Divide the circuit, as a wheel is divided by its cogs, or teeth; or fix upon a number of stars, by which the planet shall successively pass; and the delusion, occasioned by the continuity of the parts, will vanish in a moment. It will be seen of course, and with perfect distinctness, that motion, in all its forms, is as truly a succession of changes as successive thought, or successive being.

II. *Atheists assert, that the existence of things is Casual.*

In this assertion *the connexion between cause and effect, and the very existence of causation, are denied*, so far as the production of being is concerned. All beings are supposed not to have been produced, or caused, but to have happened: their existence being supposed to be a mere contingency. Some, perhaps most of those, who have adopted this system, have, however, at the same time believed matter to be eternal. On this scheme of existence I observe in the

1st. *place, that it is a mere hypothesis, unsupported by any evidence whatever.* The doctrine of casual, or contingent existence, precludes all reasoning by its very nature. The very demand of a reason from him, who adopts it, is itself an absurdity; because he declares to you in the very nature of the doctrine, that neither the existence, nor the doctrine, admits of the application of any reason. Of course, the fact, that existence has happened in any case, is in its own nature capable of being evidenced only by testimony, and of this evidence it is in fact incapable, because no witness was ever present at such a contingency. The doctrine, therefore, stands on exactly the same ground with that of all other mere assumptions; such as, that the soul of man is blue, or triangular; that the inhabitants of Jupiter walk with their heads downward; or that the Sun is a body of melted glass.

2dly. *The abettors of this doctrine have, in their endeavours to form a system, founded on it, been driven, unavoidably, into a continued succession of absurdities.*

Epicurus, the principal vender of this system, supposed, that in-

numerable solid atoms existed from eternity in infinite space; that they were of different sizes and figures, and were all separated from each other; and *that they were originally quiescent, or motionless.* When it was objected, that they must, then, have remained for ever motionless; he invented for them a *conatus ad motum; an endeavour, or tendency towards motion; which he declares to have been inherent in them eternally.* When it was objected, that, unless they were moved eternally by this *conatus*, they could never have moved at all; he avoided this difficulty by determining, *that they had moved from eternity, in parallel directions.* It was objected again, that with this motion they would never have approached any nearer to each other. To escape this difficulty, he gave them a motion, in a small degree oblique. The *cause of their motion* he declares to be *their weight;* and *their direction to be downward:* not knowing, that there is no weight, where there is no attracting body; and that every direction towards the centre of the earth is downward. I will not pursue this mass of absurdities any farther; and will only observe, that those, who have followed him, have not rendered the system a whit better than they found it.

3dly. *The actual state of things is a complete refutation of this doctrine.*

Regularity is a direct and perfect proof of the absence of casualty in the formation of that, in which the regularity exists; and the whole system of things is, in its parts, and their union in a whole, one immense and multiform system of regularity.

The twenty-four letters of the alphabet, small as the number is, are proved arithmetically to be capable of more than six hundred thousand millions of billions, of different horizontal arrangements. Were they to be thrown up into the air, and to fall in any supposed order, the chances against their falling, a second time, in the same order, are at least as great a number, as that which has been specified; and just so many chances exist against their falling in any given position.

In the human frame there are probably more than a million of parts, greater and smaller; all of which we behold united in a perfect and most regular system. The relative horizontal positions only, of which these are capable, must be expressed by more than a million of arithmetical figures; their vertical and oblique positions must be expressed by several millions more; and all these combined, must be expressed by the multiplication of these immense sums with each other. The chances, therefore, against such an union of the parts of the human body, as actually exists, even after we suppose the several parts actually formed, would be such, as would be expressed by this aggregate of figures: a number, which all the human race, who have existed since the Mosaic date of the creation, would not have been able to count, had they busied themselves in no other employment, during their lives. In addition to this, the number of chances against the original formation

of these parts is immensely greater, than against the fact of their coming together. Nor are we yet at the end of the climax: for we perfectly well know, that, if all the parts were actually and perfectly formed, they could neither put themselves together, nor be united by any human skill, or labour, however long employed. Beyond all this, if they were all formed, and all perfectly united, so as to constitute exactly, both within and without, a human frame; it would still be a mere corpse, without life or motion. Were we to admit, still further, that the frame, thus formed, might become possessed of life; it would yet be destitute of a soul, and therefore infinitely distant from the intelligent being, whom we call *man*.

All these difficulties must be surmounted, a second time, in order to the existence of mankind; one of each sex being originally, and absolutely, necessary to the existence of succeeding generations. In the same manner, the same process must be repeated, in order to the production of every kind of animals; and in most cases in order to the production of the kinds of trees, shrubs, and plants.

He, who can believe this system, can believe any thing; and his faith must undoubtedly be the nearest approximation to casualty, which has been hitherto recorded in the history of man.

The body of man is a system, made up of parts, wonderfully numerous and diversified, and still more wonderfully united and arranged. Every one of them is regularly found in all the bodies of men, in its own place; and that, the best place possible. The hair of the head, which, for aught that appears, might as naturally have grown on the face, grows only where it is needed to cover the *cerebrum* and *cerebellum*, so tender and vital, from the injuries of both heat and cold; and to become, at the same time, a beautiful ornament. The eyes are placed where only they are needed, or could be materially useful to direct the hands and the feet: the teeth, where alone they could serve their great purpose of mastication: the throat, immediately behind and beneath them, where alone it could answer its own purpose of receiving the food after it has been chewed, mixed with the saliva, and thus prepared for digestion: the stomach, beneath the throat, or more properly beneath the *œsophagus*, to receive through it the food thus prepared, and render it useful to the preservation of life by digestion. In the same manner, the heart is situated in exactly that position, with respect to the lungs, and the greater arteries and veins, in which it communicates to them, and through them to the whole body, in the most advantageous manner, the blood, which is the great instrument of sustaining life. The Lungs, also, are in the same happy manner connected with the throat by the *trachea*, so as to receive, and decompose, the air on which we live, after it is admitted into the nostrils. The great bone of the Neck and Back, commonly called the Spine, is so formed, and placed, as to sustain the body in an erect posture; as to defend, in a manner indispensably necessary, the spinal marrow, so

essential to life; and as, through orifices in the vertebræ, of which it is composed, to permit the nerves to pass, and give sensation to every part of the body; and as, at the same time, to enable us to bend into every useful position. The tongue is so constructed, and posited, as to answer exactly its various important purposes, particularly tasting and speaking; the hands, where alone they could be employed, in their innumerable uses; and the feet, where alone they could enable us to stand, or walk.

This course of illustration might be pursued through a volume, or rather through many volumes; and the more minutely and extensively it was pursued, the more clearly would it evince, at every step, a design most wonderful in itself, originally and exactly formed, and perfectly executed; every part of which is with the greatest felicity fitted to the important ends of human existence.

Let us now, for a moment, consider what would be the consequences of mere casualty with regard to this subject. Suppose the eyes, only, placed (where they might as easily have fallen by chance, as in their proper place) in any one of those innumerable positions, furnished by the body; for example, on the top of the head, or on the soles of the feet: What would have become of the man? Suppose the mouth, the throat, the trachea, the lungs, the stomach, or the heart, to have been removed even a very little distance from their present places. How soon must life, if we suppose life at first to exist, be extinguished? Or rather, how impossible must it have been for life to exist at all? Were the hands and feet to interchange positions; were the thumb to grow from the back of the hand; or the joints of the fingers to be turned outwards, nearly every purpose, which man is fitted to accomplish, must be entirely prevented. The truth is; all the parts of the human body are of high importance to our well-being, both as to their structure, and their position; and very many of them are in both respects absolutely indispensable. A very small change in any one of these would be equally fatal to comfort, and to life.

Whence, then, has it come to pass, that, in so many millions of the human race, all the parts of the human body are exactly formed, and exactly placed, in their proper and relative position? that the blood has flowed in its thousand channels, and regularly returned to the fountains, in all its various courses? that the food has ever been digested; the processes of secretion carried on with exactness; the juices separated without mixture; and the nutriment of the whole Body conveyed to every part, however minute; and however distant? that the organs of sensation have ever been formed; and the bones, muscles, and sinews, furnished with strength, and the nerves with sensitive perception; and that thus the Body has become a frame, a tenement, suited to the inhabitation of an intelligent mind?

Let me further ask, has mere casualty been the source of contrivance, of thought, of volition, of virtue? Has an immaterial Exist-

ence possessed of these wonderful powers, started into being by a mere contingency? That the soul is immaterial, I shall, as I have before observed, attempt to prove in another discourse, and shall therefore take it, here, for granted. Will it be held, that souls are also progenitors, and propagate each other, after chance has given birth to the first in the series?

The first proofs of design, viz. the provision of means, adapted evidently to the accomplishment of ends, are also found in every animal Body; in every organized structure; in the mineral Kingdom, to a vast extent; and universally in the figure, positions, motions, and appurtenances, of the worlds composing the planetary system. Their magnitudes, their distances from the Sun; the position of their axes; their diurnal and annual revolutions; their furniture of moons; the central station, size, and splendour, of the vast luminous world, around which they roll; the regularity and harmony of all their motions; are overwhelming proofs of design and wisdom, such as can be attributed only to a boundless and uncreated Mind.

III. *Atheists assert, that the several beings, found in the Universe, owe their existence to the operations of Matter.*

In opposing this scheme we return again to arguments, derived from the connexion between cause and effect: for here a cause is not only supposed, but directly alleged by the Atheist; and is regarded by him as being adequate to the production of all beings. It will be my business to prove from the inadequacy, and the consequent inefficacy, of the alleged causes, that it was not the real source of existence to the beings, visible in the world around us. For the accomplishment of this purpose, I observe in the

1st. place, *that Matter is acknowledged by the Atheist, with whom I am now arguing, to be destitute of Intelligence:* it being the great object of his scheme to prove, that his own existence, and that of other beings, was not derived from an Intelligent cause.

2dly. *The eternal existence of Matter is a merely gratuitous supposition; unsupported by any evidence whatever.*

3dly. *If we admit, that Matter existed from eternity, its properties, and operations, must all have been also eternal.*

As the properties of Matter are inherent in it; they must, in the case supposed, have been eternally inherent. Of course whatever powers Matter possessed, it possessed them eternally: there being no cause, intrinsic or extrinsic, to increase, lessen, or alter them. Hence it is certain that they must have operated from eternity, in every way, in which they could operate at all. All the beings, therefore, and all the changes, which its operations could produce, it must have produced from eternity. Hence it is plain, that there must have been an eternal and infinite series of Men, of Animals, of Vegetables, of Motions, and of Changes of every other kind, in the universe. But this has been demonstrated to be a self-contradiction. The premises, whence it is derived, are therefore false.

That Matter should have possessed these powers from Eternity, without exerting them, and that it should have exerted them from Eternity, are thus proved to be, as I asserted in the former discourse, plain impossibilities. It follows, then, undeniably, that, if Matter existed eternally in one uniform state, that state was entirely quiescent; and that no change, however small, could ever have taken place in it, but from an extrinsic cause. Thus, the supposition of the eternal existence of Matter, is so far from accounting for the existence of the beings, and the changes, in the Universe, that it will not account for any thing; not even for the least change in the position, or circumstances, of an atom.

4thly. *There is no fact, which gives even the appearance of plausibility to this scheme.*

The only facts, which, so far as I know, have ever been seriously alleged to this purpose, are the production of insects, and plants, by what is called *equivocal generation:* according to which, by the mere fermentation of various kinds of matter, the insect is supposed to be produced without a parent, and the plant without a seed.

To this I answer,

(1st.) *That this is, at best, a mere supposition: no evidence having been ever furnished of the fact which it alleges.*

(2dly.) *Francisco de Redi, and Malpighi, two eminent Italian philosophers, have, by a long train of ingenious and accurate experiments, unanswerably proved, that equivocal generation is a groundless hypothesis; and that no Matter, in any process of fermentation, will produce an insect without a parent, or a plant without a seed.* As, therefore, all the powers and operations of matter must, if eternal, be eternally the same; and as matter now produces no such beings, as alleged; it follows unanswerably, that matter was never the cause of any such productions.

5thly. *Innumerable facts directly refute this scheme.*

1st. *That this world, in its present form, was not eternal, is certain; because its surface is continually changing, and approximating, towards a level.* If we suppose one particle only to have descended from the higher towards the lower parts of the surface in an age, or in a million of ages; the whole, unless counteracted by opposing causes (and in most places there is no trace of such causes) must have become an entire level, at a period, too distant to be conceived by any mind, or expressed by any numbers. Yet millions of tons annually descend towards the centre. The date of the Earth, in its present state, must, therefore, have begun at a time not far distant.

2dly. *If, contrary to truth, we admit gravitation to be an inherent property of Matter, it could not possibly have caused the revolutions of the planets.*

Let the planets be placed at any supposable place, and distance, within the reach of the Sun's attraction; the only direction, in which

they could possibly move, would be a straight or right line towards the Sun; because this is the only direction, in which *his* gravitation, and *theirs*, can possibly act. It is easily, and mathematically, proved, that to the circular motion of the planets round the Sun a projectile force, or impulse, acting in the direction of a tangent to the planetary orbit, was originally indispensable. So far, therefore, would the planets have been from moving in their proper orbits round the Sun, by the mere power of gravitation, that they could only have fallen directly to the Sun. Should it be said, that the planets have moved eternally in their present orbits; and that the Earth, for example, has performed an infinite series of revolutions; it must also be said, that the Moon, in her circuit round the Earth, has performed a series thirteen times, and the Earth, in its rotation round its axis, a series 365 times, as great, as that infinite series.

3dly. *The diurnal motions of the planets, the positions of their axes, and the attendance of their satellites, which accord with no regularity, or proportion, to their magnitudes, or their distances from the Sun, and cannot be explained in any consistency with mere material principles, prove themselves, unquestionably, to have been derived from* an extrinsic and intelligent cause.

6thly. *From a sufficiently regular* course of observations, employed on the eclipses of the Sun and Moon, and a series of correct calculations concerning them, it is proved by *Ferguson*, that the ancient eclipses, noted in history, took place at times, differing sensibly from those, which the calculations require; that these differences of time regularly diminish, as the times approach nearer to us; and that the orbit of the Moon was, therefore, more distant from the Earth, formerly, than it is now. Hence it is certain, that the Moon's motion round the Earth, instead of having been eternal, has existed only during a little period.

In the last place, for I will not dwell on this atheistical dream any longer, *if all these impossibilities were removed, and all these proofs given up, another would still remain, which completely refutes this scheme;* viz. *that Matter cannot be the cause of Intelligence.*

Quod non habet, dare non potest: what a cause does not contain or possess, it cannot communicate; is a maxim, or self-evident proposition. That Matter, therefore, which cannot think, will, or originate motion, should communicate thought, volition, and motivity, is plainly impossible.

Thus have I considered the only atheistical schemes of existence, which merit any serious attention. Were I disposed to exhibit the abettors of these schemes in a ridiculous and contemptible light; the efforts of *Anaximander*, *Epicurus*, *the Egyptian Philosophers*, *the Count de Buffon*, and many others both ancient and modern, to explain the origin and progress of things, would furnish me with ample materials. But such an exhibition would ill become this sacred place. I shall only add, that the existence of the very Matter,

to which so much is attributed, and on which such reliance is placed, by atheistical philosophers, can never be evinced. I myself believe, indeed, that it exists; but I also know, that its existence cannot be proved.

REMARKS.

From these observations it is evident, in the

1st. place, *that Atheism in all its forms is a specimen of the most absolute credulity.*

The three great atheistical schemes of existence, here recited, and undoubtedly the best which have been formed, are founded on mere assumptions, or gratuitous hypotheses, unsupported by a particle of argument, or evidence. But to adopt a mere assumption, especially in a case of infinite importance, is credulity in the extreme, and folly which cannot plead even a pretence. More than this, each of these schemes is refuted by direct demonstration. Beyond even this, they are unanswerably proved not only to be false, but to be impossible. Still the Atheist goes on quietly with his faith in these hypotheses; and resolves to believe, in defiance of demonstration, and impossibility.

2dly. *There are still men, in considerable numbers, and of no small ingenuity, who profess themselves Atheists; and who thus prove that Atheism has its seat in the heart, and not in the understanding.* Nothing can be more evident, than that these doctrines can never have been embraced from argument, or conviction, or by an unbiassed understanding. They were, therefore, certainly adopted under the influence of the heart; and believed, only because they were loved, or because God was dreaded and hated. Thus *the heart* is the true source of *the belief that there is no God;* and he is *a fool*, who, governed by its wishes, thus believes against all reason and evidence.

3dly. *As such men have thus believed under such an influence; so, if we indulge such wishes, we may be given up by God to these, or any other, fatal doctrines, and of course to destruction.*

The great danger lies in the heart; and in its hostility to God and his character. What we wish we easily believe; and what we dread, or hate, we easily disbelieve. As we dread the anger of God against sin, and against ourselves particularly as sinners, and all his designs to punish it; as we hate to renounce it, and its pleasures; we contrive easily, and naturally, to disbelieve his designs, character, and existence. Especially is this the case, when God, provoked by our rebellion and opposition, gives us up to a reprobate mind.

How greatly ought we then to fear this mass of guilt, danger, and ruin! How earnestly ought we to watch, and strive, and pray that we fall not into this train of temptations and miseries! Let us resolve to *receive the truth*, at all events, however humbling or painful, *in the love of it.* And may God grant that it may *make us free from the bondage of corruption, and translate us into the glorious liberty of his Children.* Amen.

SERMON III.

COMPARATIVE INFLUENCE OF ATHEISM AND CHRISTIANITY.

PSALM XIV. 1.—*The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt; they have done abominable works; there is none that doeth good.*

IN my last discourse, I considered the objections of Atheists against the being and government of God; and those doctrines concerning the origin and existence of things, which they have substituted for the doctrines of Theism and the Scriptures, on this most important subject. The objections I endeavoured to prove unsound and nugatory, and the doctrines to be mere hypotheses, demonstrably false, and plainly impossible. Hence I concluded them to be the doctrines of the heart, and not of the intellect. Hence also I concluded, that he who embraces them is, according to the language of the text, *a fool*. There is no more absolute folly than to believe doctrines because we love them, and to reject doctrines because we hate them: or, in other words, to suffer our inclinations to govern our understanding.

The consequences of these doctrines, or of Atheism generally, are in the text declared in these words, *They are corrupt; they have done abominable works: there is none that doeth good.* In other words, *Atheists are corrupt; they do abominable works: there is none of them that doeth good.* This character of Atheists, seen by the Psalmist, and declared by the Spirit of God, three thousand years ago, has not changed for the better, at any period, down to the present day. They have ever been corrupt; they have ever done abominable works; there has never been among them a single good or virtuous man.

It cannot but be an useful employment to examine this interesting subject, and to learn, from such an examination, the manner in which these false principles, dictated and embraced by a bad heart, contribute, in their turn, as powerful causes, to render that heart still more corrupt; to fill the life with abominable actions; and to prevent every one, who embraces these doctrines, from assuming the character of virtue.

Before I enter upon the direct discussion of this subject it will be proper to observe, that *Virtue is nothing but voluntary obedience to truth; and Sin nothing but voluntary obedience to falsehood.* Or, more generally, virtue and sin consist in a disposition or preparation of the heart, flowing out into acts of obedience, in the respective manners which I have mentioned. From these definitions which, it is presumed, cannot be successfully denied, it is evident, that every false doctrine, which is relished by the heart, will, of

course, govern its affections and volitions; and will, therefore, control the conduct. Nor is it less evident, that, in the present case, the doctrine in question, being embraced only because they are loved, will eminently influence the heart which has dictated them, and eminently affect all the moral conduct.

It will also be clear to all persons, accustomed to the investigation of moral subjects, that *the character of a man must, at least in a great measure, be formed by his views of the several subjects, with which he is acquainted.* As these are expanded, magnificent, and sublime; or narrow, ordinary, and grovelling; the taste, the character, and the conduct, will be refined and noble, or gross and contemptible. A man, accustomed to an exalted sphere of life, and to a regular intercourse with great objects, will assume of course a dignity and greatness of mind, and a splendour of personal character, which cannot be assumed by him, whose views have ever been limited to a few and small objects, and whose life has been passed in actions of no significance. There is something princely, of course, in men even of moderate endowments, when properly educated for the inheritance of a throne. There is every thing diminutive, of necessity, in him, who is trained only to be a camp-boy or a shoe-black.

When men are educated to contemplation, and science, it may not unnaturally be imagined, that *their minds*, allowing for the difference of their endowments, *will*, from the similarity of their pursuits, *be formed into a similarity of character.* This, however, is, to a great extent, a mistaken opinion. The very objects, with which such men are *equally conversant*, may, *from their respective modes of viewing them*, become totally unlike, and even contradictory, in their apprehension. It will not be questioned, that the mind of a *Heathen*, studying, with the views of a Heathen, the *polytheism of Greece and Rome*, would be affected very differently from the mind of a *Christian*, investigating the same subject. The manner, in which we regard any object of inquiry, may differ from some other manner almost as much, as any two objects of inquisition may differ from each other. The views of him, who regards the firmament as a great blue canopy, and the stars as little sparks of light, differ from the views of the Astronomer, who considers the firmament as a boundless expansion, and the stars as an innumerable multitude of Suns, almost as widely, as the two objects of contemplation differ. The manner, therefore, in which human contemplations are directed, may be very various, although the objects are the same. In truth it is not the grandeur or diminutiveness of the objects, but the greatness or littleness of the views entertained of them, which affect, and form, the character.

The taste, or relish, of the mind, particularly, *will*, in a great measure, if not wholly, *be formed by this cause.* The mind, by an early habit accustomed to little views, will soon learn to relish no other. Accustomed from the beginning to a connexion with gro-

velling objects only, it soon ceases to be pleased with any other objects. Accustomed to form diminutive and debased schemes of action, it becomes easily, and finally, disgusted with every thing of an enlarged and superior nature.

As these things are true of all the views, entertained by Man; so they are especially true of those, which may be called original, and fundamental; which involve all subordinate ones; which direct every future course of thought; and to which the mind thinks it necessary to reconcile every succeeding purpose, relish, and opinion. If the stem, here, be a mere twig; the branches must be poor and diminutive indeed. Thus, he, the basis of whose religion was an idol, must form a system of theology and ethics, dismally lean and contemptible.

All the motives to human conduct are found, either in the Objects, with which we converse; or in the VIEWS, *with which we regard them.* If the objects, or the views, be low and debased, low and debased motives, only, will arise out of them. But motives originate all our conduct, regulate its progress, and determine its nature. If they be low and debased, the conduct will partake of the same characteristics, and will of course be grovelling, unworthy, and odious.

Thus the objects, with which we are conversant, and the views which we form of them, will determine both the internal and external character of Man.

It will be remarked, that I have considered this subject, independently of the peculiar doctrines of Christianity; and for this reason; that I am arguing with those, who deny a divine Revelation.

These things being premised, I assert, in accordance with the text, *that the proper, natural, and necessary influence of Atheism is to contract, and render grovelling, the views, to corrupt the character, and to deform the life of Man.* The truth of this assertion I shall attempt to illustrate under the following heads:

1. *The views, which the Atheist forms of the Natural World:*
2. *His views of the Moral World:*
3. *His views of the Future World:*

All these I shall, also, from time to time, compare with the views, which the *Christian* entertains of the same subjects.

1. *I shall consider the views, which the Atheist forms of the Natural World.*

In this consideration, I am disposed to allow the Atheist all the advantages which he can derive from endowments or acquisitions. He may, with my consent, be, what I well know he can be, a Chymist, a Botanist, a Mineralogist, or an Anatomist. He shall, if he pleases, be a Mathematician, a Natural Philosopher, an Astronomer, a Metaphysician, or a Poet. I mean, that he may be any, or all, of these, so far as one man, of his opinions, can be reasonably supposed to sustain the several characters specified. I will not

even avail myself of the celebrated remark of *Lord Bacon*, that *a little Philosophy will make a man an Atheist, but a great deal will make him a Christian:* although I entertain not a doubt of its truth. My business is not to dwell on minute things, but to show the nature of those which are of higher importance.

The Atheist, then, may with enlarged understanding, and skill, contemplate the structure of the heavenly Bodies. He may, with the eye of a Naturalist, explore the organization of the vegetable kingdom; may analyze the chymical principles, and combinations, of plants and minerals; and may trace, to use his own language, the hidden walks of Nature in her mysterious progress through the system. Or, with the imagination of the Poet, and the science of the Astronomer, he may be fascinated with the beauty, splendour, and sublimity, of the landscape, or delighted with the distances, magnitudes, motions, harmony, and magnificence, of the planetary and stellary systems; still his views of all these, and all other, natural objects, although in his mind the most illustrious objects which exist, will be poor and pitiable.

All of them, in his opinion, *owe their being to fate, accident, or the blind action of stupid matter.* They exist for no end; and accomplish none. They spring from no wisdom; and display none. They are, therefore, what they would have been, had they been made, and moved, by an Intelligent Cause, without any purpose, or design, in their creation: a vast apparatus of splendour and magnificence, assembled together for nothing: an immense show, in which nothing was intended, and from which nothing can be gained. The Mind, in surveying them, asks instinctively, and irresistibly, How came this train of wonders into being? and is answered with nothing but perplexity and folly, but doubt and despair. In the same manner it inquires, Of what use will this mighty assemblage of worlds and their furniture prove? The only reply is, Of none. All, with all their motions, furniture, and inhabitants, are the result, and under the control, of that iron-handed necessity, which exists in the blind operations of unconscious Matter; that *gloomy Fate of the Heathens*, to which they sullenly submitted because they deemed it inevitable; and which, while it showered calamities in abundance, cut off every hope, and every effort, for the attainment of deliverance. To the wretch, whose mind is effectually imbued with this scheme of things, the Universe is changed into a vast Prison, where himself and his companions are confined by bolts and bars, forged by the hand of blind, immoveable, and irresistible Destiny; where no heart is found to pity their sufferings, and no hand to lend relief; where no eye looks with sympathy, and no ear listens with tenderness; where the walls reach to heaven, and are hung with clouds and midnight; and where every effort to escape, conducts the miserable tenants only to the sullen cavern of Despair.

Should the Atheist, sick with the forlorn and hopeless contem-

plation, turn his eye from this scheme of things to his only alternative, the doctrine of Chance, he will find himself equally distant from refreshment, and from hope. Here, himself and all other beings in Earth, Sea, and Sky, with all their properties and operations, are mere accidents, involved and perplexed in their movements, like the particles of dust in a whirlwind. In his view, if he understand his system, and will think consistently with himself, his thoughts, volitions, and efforts, the continuance of his own being, and that of all other things, are mere casualties, produced by no cause, upheld by no support, directed by no wisdom, and existing to no purpose. Mere abortions, precarious in the extreme, possessed only of a doubtful and fluctuating existence, they tremble and flutter, in a dreadful state of suspense, over the gloomy abyss of Annihilation. All, here, is doubt and discouragement. Not a plan can be rationally formed, not a hope, consistently indulged. Where every thing is to happen, if it exist at all; or where the result of the casualty, is with the same probability, seen to be any thing or nothing; it is plain, that nothing can be expected. Against every expectation, the chances are millions of millions to one; for every supposable thing is as likely to exist as any other.

Should it be said, that the Atheist refutes these declarations, by his conduct; because he lives, and acts, like other men, and is no more influenced than others by a regard either to fate, or chance: I answer, that the objection is erroneous. The Atheist, instead of refuting these observations, refutes himself. He denies his own principles; and avails himself of the principles which he opposes. If he understands his own scheme; he cannot but know, that the necessity of existence, which he professes to believe, is irreconcilable with all freedom of mind, with all voluntariness, with all contrivance. He knows, that connexion cannot spring from chance; that order cannot arise out of accident; that whatever exists fortuitously, exists independently of all things else, and can never be connected with any other thing, by any moral or useful relation. If, therefore, he would think and act rationally, he would neither contrive, expect, fear, nor hope; neither build, nor plant; neither reap, nor gather; but would yield himself up to the control of irresistible Destiny, or to the capricious disposal of Contingence.

The works of God, are in their own nature beautiful, magnificent, sublime, and wonderful; and by every eye, which sees them, their *nature* must in some degree be discerned. It is readily admitted, therefore, that the Atheist himself, if he be not a sot, must in some degree perceive the sublimity and splendour, which are inherent in the Earth and the Heavens. But from these illustrious attributes he subtracts immensely, when he denies, that they owe their origin to an intelligent and eternal Mind; when he denies, that they are moved, and ruled, by infinite perfection; and that by the same perfection, they are conducted to a divine and glorious end, a purpose infinitely excellent and desirable. Without this conside-

ration, all their lustre becomes feeble and fading; a dim taper, gradually declining on the sight towards a final extinction. At the same time, by attributing their existence to Fate, Chance, or Matter, he contracts their greatness, and lowers their elevation, to a measure equally humble and painful; and covers even the bright lights of Heaven with a shroud of gloom and obscurity.

When the Christian beholds the Earth and the Heavens, how different are his views of the same illustrious objects! To him the vast congregation of Worlds, is the immense and eternal empire of the Self-existent and Omnipresent JEHOVAH, contrived by his boundless wisdom, chosen by his boundless goodness, and executed by his boundless power. This single thought, like the rising of the Sun, upon this benighted World, imparts to the Universe, in a moment, a diffusive and illimitable splendour, investing, explaining, and adorning all the beings of which it is composed. On all, the sublime impression of Design, is instamped as a living image, glowing in living colours. The Universe becomes a vast assemblage of Means, directed to an immortal Purpose; arranged in perfect order; adjusted with exact symmetry; and operating with complete harmony: and all, from the glory of that purpose, and the perfection of their arrangement, symmetry, and operations, derive an elevation and grandeur, of which they are otherwise utterly incapable.

God, *before whom all beings are as nothing*, is invested, by his perfections, with a greatness and sublimity, in comparison with which, all other magnificence, separately considered, becomes *less than nothing and vanity*. Eternal, Omnipresent, and Immutable Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, are objects so high, so vast, that all the Worlds and Suns, which they have created, diminish, when compared with them, *to the drop of the bucket, and the small dust of the balance.* But in the view of the Christian, these worlds, and every thing which they contain, derive a glorious lustre, from being an immediate exhibition of these attributes, and of the incomprehensible Being, in whom they reside. Wherever the Christian casts his eyes, he sees all things full of God. The omnipresent, all-creating, and all-ruling JEHOVAH lives, and moves, and acts, in every thing which meets his view. In the Spring, he comes forth in his beauty and beneficence, clothes the naked World in the richest attire, and awakens universal life and joy. In the Summer, and the Autumn, *he openeth his* bountiful *hand, and satisfieth the wants of every living thing*. In the Winter, *he hath his way in the whirlwind, and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.* The Heavens recall to the mind of the Christian the day when God said, *Let there be a firmament; and there was a firmament:* In the Sun, still resounds that Voice, which commanded, *Let there be light, and there was light.*

In the mean time, all things, borne on, in the view of the Atheist, in a blind and relentless career by irresistible Necessity, or dancing

in fortuitous and endless mazes, like the imaginary Atoms supposed by him to have produced them, and therefore dark, cheerless, and hopeless, are, in that of the Christian, directed by the Wisdom, Power, and Goodness of the Creator; and therefore, to him, full of expectation, hope, and comfort. Wherever he is, there God is. His ear is always open to his prayers; His eye, to his dangers, sorrows, and fears; His hand, extended to supply, to relieve, to comfort, and to save. An Almighty friend is every where found by him, in the crowd and in solitude, by night and by day; never absent; never forgetful; never unkind; never incumbered by any concerns, which will prevent his wants from being regarded; nor surrounded by any difficulties, which can hinder them from being supplied. Between this friend and him, time and place can never intervene: he is every where, and is every where to him a God.

In this vast particular, the difference between the views of the Atheist and those of the Christian, I need hardly observe, is incalculable and immense. The efficacy of these views on the Mind must, it is obvious, be proportioned to their nature.

2dly. *I will now examine the views, which the Atheist forms of the Moral World.*

The Moral World is the *World of Minds*, or of Intelligent being. The importance of this World will, in some good measure, be conceived from these considerations; that the individuals, who compose it, are the only beings, by whom good can be contrived, or done; and the only beings, by whom it can to any extent be enjoyed. Of this World, the conceptions of the Atheist are, in a far greater degree, inferior to those of the Christian.

The only object, which the Atheist knows in the Moral World, is Man; and Man, lowered to the humblest possible level of intellectual existence. His origin, in the view of the Atheist, is the same with that of a Mushroom; and his character, that of a mere animal. He is the subject of no moral government; insusceptible of moral obligation; incapable therefore of virtue, excellence, and loveliness; possessing attributes, which, like himself, are the offspring, and under the control, of Necesssity, or Chance; united to his fellow-men by nothing but Time and Place; insulated in all his interests, and those the interests of a swine only; without the knowledge, or the existence, of law or government, merit or reward; and born merely to breathe, to eat, to drink, to sleep, to propagate his kind, to decay, and to die. How obvious is it, that on these views of Man, there can be erected no personal worth, enjoyment, or hope; no common good; no sense of rectitude; and no efforts for the promotion of general happiness.

Personal worth is all dependent on the existence of laws, and government, formed by one, who has a right to enact the former, and administer the latter; a right founded on the relations, which he sustains to those who are under his government. To these relations, also, must the laws and the government be conformed in

such a manner, as that that, and that only, shall be enacted, which requires the conduct, suited to these relations, and promotive of general and individual happiness. In the same manner must be directed the rewards, punishments, and administrations. But on the scheme of the Atheist, there is no such ruler, and no such right to rule; there are no such relations, and no such duties. Rectitude, the sum of personal worth, consists in rendering voluntarily, that which others have a right to claim. But on his scheme, no claim can be founded, and none exists. There is, therefore, nothing due: of course, no duty can be performed, and no rectitude experienced. Hence that high, unceasing, and refined enjoyment, which attends the sense of rectitude, can never be found by the Atheist.

As the Atheist is without rectitude, or moral principle; and destitute of the sense, and enjoyment, of it; so it is plain, that his whole conduct must be directed by a regard to mere convenience; or rather by a regard to what his passions, unrestrained, rendered intense by habitual indulgence, and fastening their view only on the present object, may deem convenient. In other words, his conduct must be dictated merely by the existing passion and appetite; and must, therefore, be that very conduct, which has produced almost all the miseries and complaints of Mankind.

If this scheme be true, all men ought undoubtedly to be governed by it. What would become of such a world; and of the Atheist himself in the midst of such a world? No man, it is evident, could exercise confidence towards any other man. The loss of the enjoyment, furnished by this single delightful emotion, an enjoyment absolutely indispensable even to comfort and to safety, would infinitely overbalance every good, which Atheists ever found. Without confidence, no society can be happy. Without confidence, no society, no friendship, no union, no connexion, between intelligent beings can exist. Even thieves and robbers, as has ever been proverbially acknowledged, cannot, without confidence, form even their dreadful state of society. The world, dispossessed of it, would become an image of hell; and distrust, jealousy, wrath, revenge, murder, war, and devastation, overspread the Earth. In the midst of millions, the Atheist would find himself in a desert. His situation would be that of a hermit; his character, that of a fiend. By day, he would hide himself in his den: by night, he would prowl, as a wolf, for the prey, on which he was to live.

To such a World, it is obvious *Hope, which*, in the language of the Poet, *comes to all*, could *never come*. On Hope, even as the World now is, men in a great measure live. The prospect of something better to-morrow, brightens all the comforts of man, and tinges with light, the clouds of melancholy and affliction, to-day. Were all the enjoyments of human life to be fairly reckoned up; it is not improbable, that those which Hope brings in her train, would be the greatest mass, both in number and value. But in

these, the Atheist could not share; because from Fate or Chance, nothing can be rationally expected; and because, from his fellow-men, governed by his doctrines, there could arise nothing but danger, distrust, and fear.

Should it be said, that this situation of things would be so absolutely intolerable, that Mankind, unable to exist in it, would be compelled to unite in society, and establish government: I admit the conclusion; and perfectly accord with the premises, from which it is drawn. But what would be the Nature of this government; and on what basis would it be founded? Its basis would plainly be dire necessity, existing in the impossibility of living without it; and its operations would be only those of force. The Rulers would feel no sense of rectitude, possess no virtue, and realize no moral obligation. To all these things their fundamental principles would be hostile, and would render the very thought of them ridiculous. God is the only acknowledged source of moral obligation; but to them there would be no God, and therefore no such obligation. Conformity to his laws is the only rectitude; but to these men there would be no such laws, and therefore no rectitude. Convenience, of course, or, in better words, Passion and Appetite, would dictate all the conduct of these Rulers. The nature of a government directed by Passion and Appetite we know, imperfectly, by the histories of *Caligula*, *Nero*, and *Heliogabalus;* and more thoroughly, though still imperfectly, in those of *Danton*, *Marat*, *Robespierre*, and their associates. Who could be willing to see such a tissue of madness, cruelty, misery, and horror, woven again?

The subjects of such a government would, at the same time, be, in the same manner, under the influence of the same doctrine. Their conduct would accordingly be an exact counterpart to that of their rulers. Appetite would change every man into a swine; and Passion, into a tiger. Right would neither be acknowledged, nor be felt, nor exist. Whatever was coveted would be sought, and obtained, if it could be done with safety. Whatever was hated, would, so far as safety would permit, be hunted, and destroyed. To deceive, to defraud, to betray, to maim, to torture and to butcher, would be the common employment, and the common sport. The dearest and most venerable relations would be violated by incestuous pollution; and children, such of them, I mean, as were not cast under a hedge, thrown into the sea, or dashed against the stones; would grow up without a home, without a parent, without a friend. The world would become one vast den; one immeasurable sty; and the swine and the wolf would be degraded, by a comparison with its inhabitants.

Should it be doubted whether even Atheism would terminate in such doctrines, and such practices; the means of removing the doubt are at hand. Hobbes, Shaftesbury, and other English infidel writers, some of whom have disclaimed the character of Atheists, and wished at least to be considered as embracing Theism,

have directly declared, that there is no right, except that which the *Leviathan*, or civil magistrate, pronounces to be such; and that rectitude, instead of being founded in the nature of things, or in the will of God, is the result of human institutions, and arbitrary decisions, merely. Little consideration is necessary, to enable us to discern, that this single principle involves all the consequences, which I have attributed to Atheism, dissolves at once all obligations to duty, annihilates virtue, and crumbles the bands which hold society together. Accordingly HOBBES declares it *to be lawful to do, and to get, whatever we can with safety;* and multitudes of his coadjutors and followers have taught, that *pollution in almost every form is lawful and desirable, and that animal enjoyment is the only real good.* The infidels of the *French* school, who have not found it necessary, like the *English*, to regard any appearances, have openly denied, and ridiculed, all the fundamental principles of morality, as well as of piety. I have been informed by what I esteem good authority, that a numerous assembly of *French Literati*, being asked in turn, at one of their meetings, by their president, whether there was any such thing as moral obligation, answered, in every instance, that there was not. This happened a little before the *French* Revolution. Since the commencement of that stupendous event, as well as in very many instances before, the body of *French* Infidels have not only denied all the obligation, which bind us to truth, justice, and kindness, but pitied and despised, as a contemptible wretch, bewildered by ignorance and folly, the man, who believes in its existence.

The only instance, in which Infidels of any description have possessed the supreme power and government of a country, and have attempted to dispose of human happiness according to their own doctrines and wishes, is that of *France*, since the beginning of the Revolution. If we consider this government as established over a nation, educated for ages to the belief and obedience of many doctrines of Christianity, and retaining, as to a great majority of the people, the habits formed by that education, the state of that nation will evince, beyond a question, that all, which I have said, is true without exaggeration. *France*, during this period, has been a theatre of crimes, which, after all preceding perpetrations, have excited in the mind of every spectator, amazement and horror. The miseries, suffered by that single Nation, have changed all the histories of the preceding sufferings of Mankind into idle tales, and have been enhanced, and multiplied, without a precedent, without number, and without a name. The Kingdom appeared to be changed into one great Prison; the inhabitants converted into felons; and the common doom of Man commuted for the violence of the sword and the bayonet, the sucking-boat and the guillotine. To contemplative men it seemed for a season, as if the Knell of the whole nation was tolled, and the World summoned to its execution, and its funeral. Within the short time of ten years, not less than three

millions of human beings are supposed to have perished, in that single country, by the influence of Atheism. Were the world to adopt, and be governed by, the doctrines of *France*, what crimes would not Mankind perpetrate; what agonies would they not suffer?

Let us now turn our view from this prospect of guilt and desolation, this dark and final abyss of sin and ruin, where no solitary virtue gleams, where no ray of hope or comfort trembles, through the profound midnight; and refresh the wearied sight by casting a momentary glance over the moral world of the Christian. Here, at the head of the vast chain of moral being, reaching like *Jacob's* ladder from Earth to Heaven, sits on the throne of infinite dominion, the God of *Abraham*, the God of *Isaac*, the God of *Jacob;* the God of all, who, like them, believe, worship, and obey their Creator. In him, the Self-existent and Infinite Mind, the Christian beholds unceasingly, an object of boundless sublimity, grandeur, beauty, and loveliness; commanding by the disclosure of his character, and exhausting, all finite admiration, complacency, love, and praise; expanding every view, refining every affection, and ennobling every attribute. From the immediate contemplation of this glorious Being, raised to a superiority and distinction, of which he could otherwise have never conceived, he casts his eyes abroad into the Universe, which that Being has created. There he beholds an endless train of Intelligent minds reflecting, with no unhappy lustre, the beauty and glory of their Maker. From the pre-eminent dignity of the Archangel, through the glowing zeal of the Seraph, and the milder wisdom of the Cherub; through the high endowments of *Moses*, *Isaiah* and *Paul;* down to the humble but virtuous inhabitant of a cottage, one spirit lives, and breathes, and actuates, in all; and that spirit is divine. Each wears, and exhibits, in his own manner, and that manner a delightful and useful one, the image and beauty of JEHOVAH. All, though of different magnitudes, diffuse a real light; all are stars, though *one star differeth from another star in glory.* All are the subjects of virtuous affections; all are fitted to admire and adore, to glorify and enjoy, their Creator: all are formed, and disposed voluntarily, to fill up their existence with doing good, with promoting individual enjoyment and increasing universal happiness: all are bound together as children of one God and brethren of each other, by *love the bond of perfection.* Every one, therefore, is lovely in the sight of his Maker.

To this Universe of Minds the Christian believes, that the Creator, who is of course the rightful lawgiver, has given laws, for the direction of its members, which require perfect conduct, and ensure to it perfect happiness. These laws extend to all the thoughts, words, and actions, alike; and regulate each with unerring propriety. Their obligation is, and is acknowledged to be, divine; nothing can sunder, nothing can lessen it. This, instead of being

a source of regret to him, is his delight; for what these laws require is better than any thing else; and more fraught with self-approbation, worth, and enjoyment. Of course, in all the relations and situations in life, as a parent or a child, a neighbour or a friend, a magistrate or a subject, he feels himself, on the one hand, irresistibly obliged, and, on the other, entirely delighted, to obey their dictates. As these dictates reach every moral being, in every situation, and with respect to every action, they provide of course, and universally, for that conduct, in every being, which is commendable and desirable.

Here an immoveable foundation is laid for peace within, for dignity of mind, for real and enduring enjoyment, in the recesses of solitude; and for the endless train of duties and blessings, necessary to the happiness of Society. A Ruler, formed in this manner, will govern only to bless. Subjects of the same character will obey, because rectitude demands their obedience, and because their obedience will insure the happiness both of themselves and their Rulers.

3dly. *I will now examine the views, which the Atheist forms of the Future World.*

On this subject, a few observations only will be necessary. The whole of the Atheist's Creed, with respect to the future world, is comprised in the following summary: That his body, begun by Chance or Necessity, is continued without design, and perishes without hope; and that his soul is a mere attribute of his body, useless and worthless while he lives, and destined at his death to rottenness and corruption: "*Death an eternal sleep*" he engraves on the gate-posts of every church-yard; and consigns, by his mandate, the numerous inhabitants to the dark and desolate regions of annihilation.

By this sweeping sentence, which he passes on all the human race, he takes away from himself, and his fellow-men, every motive, furnished by the fear of future punishment, or the hope of future rewards, to virtuous, upright, and amiable conduct.

From these three sources, expressed by the several heads of discourse, arise all motives, and all tendencies, to virtuous conduct; to truth, justice, and kindness, between man and man. From the two former, we have already seen, the Atheist derives neither motives nor tendencies to this conduct. The source, under consideration, is to him, if possible, still more barren of both. There is, therefore, nothing in this scheme, which will prevent him from doing evil, or induce him to do good. How deplorable, then, is his system, if it may be called a system of doctrines!

On the other hand, how glorious are the Christian's views of the future world! From the promise of his Creator he learns, that *his body, sown* here *in corruption, weakness, and dishonour, shall be raised*, beyond the grave, *in incorruption, power, and glory*, with so many attributes of Mind, or *Spirit*, as to be denominated by him,

who made it, *a spiritual body*. Ever young, active, and undecaying, it shall be reunited to the immortal mind, purified from every stain, and every error. This perfect man shall be admitted, *with an open and abundant entrance*, into the Heaven of Heavens, the peculiar residence of Infinite majesty, and the chosen seat of Infinite dominion. In this noblest of all habitations, this mansion of everlasting joy, he shall be united with an innumerable multitude of companions like himself, sanctified, immortal, and happy. Enrolled among the noblest and best beings in the Universe, a *child*, *a priest*, *a king*, in the house of his heavenly Father, his endless and only destination will be to know, love, serve, and enjoy God; to interchange the best affections, and the best offices, with his glorious companions; and to advance in wisdom, virtue, and happiness, for ever.

In the Future World of the Christian, therefore, motives, endless in their number, and infinite in their power, excite him unceasingly to all the conduct, which can make him useful and lovely, which can promote the happiness of his fellow-creatures, or secure the approbation of his God.

Thus have I taken a summary, comparative view of these two schemes of existence. In that of the Christian, an intelligent Mind, possessed of boundless power, wisdom, and goodness, existed from everlasting; commanded into being the Universe of Matter, and the Universe of Minds; is present in every place; sees, with an intuitive survey, every thing; controls all things with an almighty and unerring hand; and directs all to the accomplishment of the divine and eternal purpose, for which all were made. Over the Universe of Minds, destined to an immortal existence, he exercises a moral and eternal government; and prescribes laws, which require the best conduct, and insure the greatest happiness. To obedience he promises an endless reward; to disobedience he threatens an endless punishment. From this great source, the Christian sees himself derived; to this glorious end, believes himself destined; and in this sublime scheme, is presented with all motives to make him good, and with all means to make him happy.

The Atheist, on the contrary, supposes all things derived from chance, or necessity; originated without design; existing to no purpose, and terminating, whenever they do terminate, by the coercion of Fate, or the sport of Accident, as they began. Himself he regards as a lump of organized Matter; without a Mind; without law or government, except that of Fate or force; without moral action; incapable of obligation or rectitude; united to his fellow-men only by Time and Place; formed only to animal enjoyment; and destined to perish with his kindred brutes. By this scheme, all that is glorious, divine, and lovely, in that of the Christian, is annihilated; and all which, in the natural world, cannot be annihilated, and which possesses an inherent greatness and sublimity, is miserably contracted and degraded. Nothing is left to ex-

pand his views, refine his affections, or ennoble his conduct. Motives to virtue, dignity, and usefulness, he obliterates from the creation. In the future World, he finds no such motives; for to him the future world is nothing. His evil passions, in the mean time, (for such passions, whencesoever derived, he possesses) are let loose without restraint, to rage and riot without control. Of all motives to do evil, his scheme is prolific; of motives to do good, it is absolutely barren. At the same time, it is founded on mere hypothesis, sustained by no evidence, and believed, against demonstration and impossibility.

Thus it is, I think, unanswerably evident, that *he, who hath said, There is no God*, is *a Fool;* that his Atheism is a scheme, dictated only by an evil *heart;* that *it corrupts*, of course, the whole moral character; that it is productive of all *abominable works;* and that it completely precludes *the performance* of any thing that is *good.*

SERMON IV.

UNITY OF GOD.

I. Corinthians, viii. 4.—*There is none other God but one.*

IN the three preceding sermons, I have attempted to prove the Existence of God; to refute the Objections, and expose the systems, of Atheists; and by an examination of the necessary Influence of these systems on the intellect, heart, and life, compared with that of the Christian system, to show the malignant efficacy of the former, and the desirable consequences of the latter.

The text is a direct declaration of *the Unity of God;* the next subject of discourse in the order which I have proposed.

That there is but one God, is a doctrine acknowledged in this country by every man. No attempt, therefore, to prove the soundness of this doctrine by arguments, can be necessary, in order to produce conviction of its truth. My design, in choosing it for the subject of the present discourse, is, to exhibit *the manner, in which we become possessed of it, and the evidence, with which it is attended.* In pursuing this design, I shall inquire in the

I. place, *What arguments are presented to us by the works of Creation and Providence in support of this doctrine:*

II. *What views men have entertained concerning it, under the direction of Reason:*

III. *What has been the influence of Revelation on the reception and continuance of this doctrine.*

I. *I shall inquire, what arguments are presented to us, by the works of Creation and Providence, in support of this doctrine.*

In answer to this inquiry, I observe, that the works of Creation and Providence furnish to Reason, unaided by Revelation, the following considerations.

1st. *The human mind, whenever it has admitted the being of One infinite God, has plainly found a difficulty in admitting the existence of more.*

This argument I have chosen to express in these general terms, because I am aware, that different men have thought differently concerning this subject. This, indeed, is not at all to be wondered at, when we remember the peculiarly abstruse nature of those doctrines, which respect Infinity. The only conception, which the human mind is capable of forming concerning infinity, is *that it exists.* This fact we distinctly understand; and from it we can argue with success; but the *nature of the thing, which is infinite,* or, in more proper language, *the nature of infinity itself,* we cannot understand, nor can we argue from it at all. As the idea cannot enter

our minds; so it is plain, we can never compare it with any other idea; for it is self-evident, that an idea, which we have not, can never, by us, be compared with another idea. Of course, no proposition can be formed by us, in this case, and no argument founded, or conducted, with any knowledge, or evidence. In every such case, where men think that they conceive, argue, conclude, and demonstrate, they deceive themselves; and will, if they examine, find, that they have formed propositions without ideas, or mere collections of signs without any thing signified; so far at least as *they* are concerned.

Multitudes of mankind have considered it as obviously impossible, that *two infinite beings should exist*. As an infinite being and finite beings can, however, coexist in time and place, I see no decisive evidence, that two infinite beings cannot coexist. In truth, there is no perceptible difficulty, arising from the nature of the case, in supposing, that Spirits, or immaterial beings, can occupy the same place, at the same time. The contrary opinion seems, at least, to attribute to Spirits a property, or mode of being, substantially the same with what is called Solidity, or Impenetrability, in Matter.

Others, and, so far as I know, all who have acknowledged one infinite God, have regarded the acknowledgment of more as an absurdity. In this sentiment have concurred the Patriarchs, Jews, Christians, Mohammedans, and all those modern Infidels, who have not denied the existence of such a God. These classes of men have, with one voice, renounced the idea of more than one such God. Such a general accordance in men, differing in other respects so widely, clearly indicates, that the admission of one infinite God brings with it, to the human mind, serious difficulties against the admission of more; and plainly implies, that more cannot be admitted by the mind without violence done to the understanding.

Some degree of force is lent to this argument by *Polytheism*. Wherever more Gods than one have been acknowledged; it is remarkable, that none of them has been considered as Infinite.

The ideas of Polytheistical nations concerning their Gods have, I confess, been confused and contradictory. But it appears to me evident, that no such nation, and no individual holding a plurality of Gods, has ever introduced an infinitely perfect Being into a religious Creed. From this fact it would seem, that the idea of infinite Perfection was, in the view of the human mind, incompatible with Polytheism.

Several ancient Nations, as well as individuals, particularly the *Persians*, *Egyptians*, *Chaldeans*, and *Greeks*, according to *Plutarch*, agreed in the acknowledgment of two Gods. *Plutarch* himself also, and according to his testimony *Plato*, in his old age, together with the *Pythagoreans*, acknowledged two Gods; the one the author of Good, the other the author of Evil. From the account given

of this subject, taken in all its parts, it would seem, however, that the *evil God*, or Δημιεργος, was inferior to the Αγαθεργος, or *good God*. Two equal original causes seem not to have been received into any scheme of Theology; much less two infinite original Causes. That such was generally the fact, if not universally, will, I presume, be acknowledged without a question.

From all these facts, taken together, it may, I think, be fairly concluded, that the sense of the human mind has every where been against the admission of more than one Infinite God.

2dly. *Although the proofs of the existence of God are complete, yet there is no proof of the existence of more than one God.*

The argument for the being of God, which I mentioned as exhibited in the happiest manner by *Mr. Locke*, proves unanswerably the being of one eternal, self-existent Cause, possessed of sufficient Intelligence to contrive, and sufficient Power to create, the Universe of worlds, and all which it contains. The existence of one such Cause completely removes from the mind every difficulty, and satisfactorily accounts for every thing. But this argument proves nothing concerning the existence of a second Cause; nor does it possess the smallest influence to persuade us that a second exists.

The argument, which I mentioned as managed with peculiar felicity by *Bishop Berkeley*, exhibits in a different manner, but with conclusive evidence, one universally present and universally acting Power; animating, directing, and controlling all things: but it furnishes not a single trace of evidence, that there is a second.

From the existence of *Evil*, a considerable number of men have, I acknowledge, imagined, that there was reason to suppose the existence of a second Original Cause. They appear to have argued in this manner: "The good and perfect Cause cannot be the source of Evil. Particularly, he cannot, in any sense, be concerned, or connected, with the existence of *Moral Evil*. Such Evil, however, exists; and has, therefore, been produced. Of course, there must have been some other Cause, beside the good and perfect one."

This argument is specious, but plainly unsound. For, should it be admitted, as perhaps it safely may be, that Evil cannot proceed immediately from the perfect God; yet no argument can be alleged, to prove, that he cannot with entire propriety create such moral Beings, as, left to themselves, may yield to temptations, necessarily existing in the nature of things, and thus fall into Sin. In any supposable world, Pleasure may of course attend transgression; because Good may and must exist, (if Good exist at all) which cannot be lawfully enjoyed. The Good, which lawfully belongs only to others, may be seen, coveted, and seized; and thus for the time enjoyed. Finite Beings may, therefore, be induced by the present prospect of this Pleasure to transgress; or in other words, to sin. It has not hitherto been shown; I presume it cannot be shown; that God is by his perfections obliged to prevent the existence of

Moral Evil, originated in this manner, nor of Natural Evil, as its proper punishment.

Should it be said, that the perfections of God cannot fail to operate in such a manner, as to produce the greatest good; I acknowledge it. Still it cannot be proved, nor be rendered in any degree probable, that the greatest possible Good will not be found in a System, into which Evil has admission. That, in such a System, great Good may exist, is unquestionable. The Scriptural Scheme of Redemption proves, unanswerably, to all who believe the Bible, that Good will, and, to those who do not believe it, that Good may, spring, in a world where evil is found, greater than any other, which can be imagined by the human Mind. This argument is, therefore, wholly lame with respect to the purpose, for which it is introduced; and furnishes not the least reason for supposing such a second Cause.

3dly. *If there were more Gods than one, it is incredible, that no proof should be furnished of their existence.*

As no Intelligent being can act at all, without an end in view, for which he acts; so, as has been heretofore observed,* the end, proposed by the Creator of all things, must have been found in himself, and could have been no other, than the manifestation of his own Glory. The end of the Creation of man must of course have been, that he should coincide with this great design in the exercise of all his faculties; that he should discern it with his understanding, relish it in his affections, and promote it with his active powers. But, if more Gods than one were concerned in the Creation of Man, and of the Universe, it is evident, that this, the only supposable end of their acting at all, cannot, so far as respects Man, be possibly accomplished. That Man may either discern, or relish, the excellence, or, in the exercise of his active powers, promote, the designs of his Creator, it is absolutely necessary, that he should be furnished with some knowledge, and therefore with some proof, of his existence.

To his Creator, Man *is indebted for existence*, and is therefore his property. Of course, Man is absolutely his subject; rightfully governed by his will; rightfully subjected to his Law; rightfully disposed of, at his Pleasure; and therefore wholly bound to coincide, voluntarily, with all his designs. From the Creator, also, Man derives all his blessings; and is, therefore, under the highest obligations to exercise towards Him unceasing gratitude, and to perform all the actions, which gratitude can dictate, or inspire. Finally, *the Creator of Man must be*, of course, *a Being infinitely great and glorious;* and in this character claims from him, as an Intelligent creature, his highest adoration, love, complacency, and praise. In these several methods, and in these only, is Man capable of glorifying his Creator. In these, therefore, is found the

* See Sermon 1.

whole, and the only, end, which his Maker could propose in creating Man.

But to Man's performance of all, or any, of these services, it is absolutely necessary, that he *should know the Being, who created him*, and become acquainted, in some degree at least, with his character: and to this knowledge the previous knowledge of his existence is indispensable. To an unknown Being, Man cannot be conscious of indebtedness or obligation. By an unknown Being, he cannot be voluntarily governed. To the laws of an unknown Being, he cannot be voluntarily subject. To an unknown Being, he cannot be thankful. The character of an unknown Being, he can neither adore, admire, love, nor praise. If, then, his Creator be unknown, and necessarily unknown, Man cannot possibly, however virtuously he may be disposed, fulfil the only purpose, for which he was made. Of course, his Creator has, in the case supposed, made Man for a single end; and has yet so ordered the state of things, as to preclude him from any possibility of answering this end. In other words, he has created Man solely to accomplish a certain purpose; and has, at the same time, on his own part, prevented that purpose from any possibility of accomplishment.

What I have here said of one Creator, or one God, is, with exactly the same force, applicable to *two*, or *three*, or more Creators. If two or more Gods, sustaining the same character of Infinite Perfection, have been concerned in the Creation, and Providence, of this world; it is unquestionable, that they made the World, and Man upon it, for some end; and that this end must have terminated, as I have already in substance remarked, in themselves; or, in other words, must have been the manifestation of their own glory. In the same degree it is evident, that Man must have been alike indebted to them all for his being and his blessings; must be subject to their laws and government; must be bound voluntarily to coincide with their designs; and must owe them equal adoration, wonder, love, and praise. In order to the possibility of his fulfilling this end, and performing these duties, it is absolutely necessary, that he should know his obligations to them; and to this knowledge it is absolutely necessary, that he should know their existence. Whence then, if two or more such Beings exist, to whom Man is equally indebted for his being and his blessings, has it come to pass, that he is precluded, by a natural impossibility, from discovering the existence of any more than one? Whence is it, that all his sense of obligation for these high benefits; whence is it, that his gratitude, his voluntary subjection to divine government, his voluntary coincidence with the divine designs, his love, his reverence, his complacency, and his obedience, due alike to all his glorious Authors and Benefactors; are by absolute necessity, and without a possibility of its being otherwise, confined to one? Whence is it, that Man is so situated as to make the very attempt,

the very design, to render any part of this service to any other, besides one God, a crime, an act of impiety, ingratitude, and rebellion? Whence is it, that his other Creators, who formed him, only that he might render to them these solemn acts of regard, have furnished him with no trace of their agency, with no proof even of their existence; and have thus put it out of his power to render them any regard whatever?

As this state of things must, if it exist, have been produced by the voluntary act of these supposed Gods, it will, I think, be conceded, that these questions, taken in their connexion with the preceding observations, can admit of no answer. If this opinion be just, it will also be conceded that this argument from Reason, for the Unity of God, is not far from being conclusive.

4thly. *The Unity of Design, and Agency, in Creation and Providence, furnishes another argument in proof of the existence of but one God.*

So far as we are able to understand the works of Creation and Providence, we discern a general simplicity, and harmony, in the nature, and operations of all things. Amid the immense complication, which surrounds us, we perceive one set of laws, in accordance with which all things proceed in their course. The same causes produce, uniformly, the same effects in every place, and period. Vegetables spring from the same seed; germinate by the same means; assume the same form; sustain the same qualities; exist through the same duration; and come to the same end. Animals, also, are born in one manner; and exhibit the same life, powers, and tendencies. Man has one origin, form, life, system of faculties, character, and termination. All things in this world are, in one regular manner, made subservient to his use and happiness; and are plainly fitted by one design, and conducted by one agency, to this end. Day and night uniformly return by a single power, and with exact regularity. With the same regularity, and simplicity, the seasons pursue their circuit. The Sun shines, illuminates, warms, and moves the planets by a single law, and with exact uniformity. By one law, the planets keep their orbits, and perform their revolutions. The face of the Heavens is but one; and the oldest sphere, which is known, presents to our view the same constellations, which we now behold, in the nightly firmament.

Thus all things, so far as our knowledge extends, present to our view a single design, regularly executed by a single agency. But unity of design is a proof of one designer, and unity of agency, of one agent.

This argument has ever struck the minds of thinking men, with no small force. Were we able to comprehend the Universe, and to discern perfectly the manner, in which all the parts of it are conducted, it is not improbable, that this argument would be complete. In the present state of our knowledge, it must be confessed, that its influence is less satisfactory than is here supposed. Where

there is ignorance, there may, and naturally will be, doubt; and, where there is doubt, there will not be complete satisfaction. Its whole force, however, is lent to the doctrine, that there is but one God. Against the existence of two infinite Beings of opposite characters and designs, it is, I think, unanswerable. Should it be alleged, that it is no proof against the existence of two or more Infinite Beings, of the same character and designs, I admit the allegation; but observe, that the beings alleged, having, according to the supposition, exactly the same knowledge, disposition, and power, must, of course, exercise exactly the same agency; and would, therefore, constitute but one Supreme Agent, or one God.

I will not assert, that these arguments amount to a demonstration; yet it cannot be denied, that they are attended with high probability. The third of them, in my view, cannot be shaken. United, they reasonably require our belief of one God only; and at the same time evince, that the existence of more Gods than one, is a mere hypothesis, the admission of which is, of course, a contemptible absurdity. I shall now inquire,

II. *What views Men have entertained of this doctrine, under the direction of Reason.*

In answer to this inquiry, it may be observed,

1st. *That all the ancient Nations, of whose religious opinions we have a distinct account, appear, in the early periods of their existence, to have acknowledged one God.*

Among these nations, may be mentioned the *Persians*, *Hindoos*, *Chinese*, *Tartars*, *Chaldeans*, *Phenicians*, *Canaanites*, *Arabians* *Egyptians*, and *Romans*. Thus *Abimelech*, *Pharaoh*, *Job*, his *three friends*, *Elihu*, *Melchizedeck*, *Nahor*, and *Laban; Zerdusht* or *Zoroaster*, *Lao Kiun*, *Confucius*, the *ancient Brahmans*, the author of the *Orphic Hymns*, and *Numa Pompilius*; all appear to have believed in the original and perfect Cause of all things. The people of the *Thebaid*, or *Upper Egypt*, for a long time, worshipped this God alone. From these facts, connected with many others, which cannot now be mentioned, particularly from the fact, that *Noah* lived three hundred and fifty years after the flood, and that *Shem* lived five hundred and twelve years, (according to the chronology, which I choose to adopt) it may be assumed as a certainty, that all ancient Nations acknowledged One God.

2dly. *All these Nations, and all others with them, except the Jews, some sooner and some later, fell into the gross Idolatry of Polytheism.*

By the labours of *Sir William Jones* and *Mr. Bryant*, it appears to me evident, that the polytheistical system was originally one and the same. From the united accounts of other writers concerning this subject, I am equally satisfied, that it continued to be one; not however, without many modifications and varieties, introduced into it by superstition, ignorance, accident, caprice, and several other causes.

This System, I consider, as originated by that body of men, who followed *Nimrod* into the plains of *Shinar*, and built the tower of Babel; and who, being principally descendants of *Cush*, were called *Cushites*, through many succeeding generations. Indeed a part of their descendants, inhabiting the mountains of *Habesh*, on the Southwestern border of the *Red Sea*, call themselves by that name, at the present time. These people, in consequence of their dispersion by means of the confusion of their language, and of several subsequent attacks, made upon them by the descendants of *Shem and Japheth*, in two successive instances, under the command of *Chedarlaomer*, and afterwards by the *Egyptians*, were dispersed ultimately into *Persia*, *Hindoostan*, and the countries eastward of it; into *Canaan*, *Egypt*, the *Lesser Asia*, *Thrace*, and all the countries bordering on the *Mediterranean*. Wherever they went, they spread their Polytheistical Idolatry, which in this manner ultimately filled the World. The Confusion of Tongues I place four hundred and eleven years after the Deluge.

From these two facts, compared, I deduce this important doctrine; *that the knowledge of one God, was, among all ancient Nations, derived in fact from traditionary instruction; and that the only result of such investigations, as the Reason of Man entered into concerning this subject, was either Polytheism or Atheism.* While this traditionary instruction was conveyed, and received, without mixture, Mankind acknowledged and worshipped JEHOVAH, the living and true God. But, so soon as the tradition became corrupted, the knowledge and worship of the true God became corrupted also, and by degrees vanished. Traces of both, indeed, remained for periods, differing in different Nations; but their perfection was lost and forgotten.

The nearer we approach to *Noah*, the nearer we invariably come to the pure and perfect character, the unperplexed knowledge, and the unblemished worship, of JEHOVAH. The farther we recede from this Patriarch, the deeper we find ourselves regularly sinking into the abyss of Polytheism. Were the Unity and Perfection of God inferred by Reason from the works of Creation and Providence, this progress would of course be inverted. The traditionary state would be the state of obscurity, imperfection, and error; because, then, Men reasoned less, and believed upon authority more. As Philosophy advanced, and Investigations multiplied; as the subject was more frequently taken up in form, and professedly examined, and discussed; the proofs of the Unity and Perfection of God would be accumulated; and the knowledge of this great subject rendered, progressively, more clear, certain, and unobjectionable. The fact, however, has been uniformly contrary to this representation. As Tradition has declined, this knowledge has declined with it. As it has been corrupted, the knowledge has been corrupted: where it has been lost, the knowledge has been also lost.

The origin of Polytheism, is found in human reasonings only. In Asia and in Europe alike, Philosophy has devised, extended, and established, this miserable system; and, as Philosophy has been advanced, the errors of Polytheism have been enhanced and multiplied, or have terminated in Atheism. In the most flourishing state of Philosophy in *Greece*, *Rome*, *Egypt*, *Persia*, and *Hindoostan*, Polytheism has been the most absurd, its errors the most numerous, and its worship the most abominable. The doctrines of the *American Savages* concerning God, Religion, and Duty, are far less perplexed, censurable, and ridiculous, than those of these learned Countries. Nor were their own doctrines in any measure deserving of such severe condemnation before, as at, and after, the prevalence of their Philosophy. Atheism appears to have been the offspring of Philosophy alone. If we except the *Bos-jesmans*, the lowest and most persecuted people of Caffraria, and more unable, and unlikely, to preserve traditionary knowledge than any other Nation in the World, (and concerning even these there is doubt) and if we add to them the other Caffres, there is no solid reason to believe, that Atheism was ever adopted by plain, unlearned men, or admitted by the exercise of common sense. Nor, if we allow this people to be ignorant of a God, is it true, that they have adopted Atheism. *Their Ancestors* may have lost the knowledge of God; and *they* may not have recovered it. But *Atheism* is a thing totally diverse from *the mere want of the knowledge of a God. It is the disbelief and rejection of God, after the idea, and the character, of God, have been presented to the mind, and proofs furnished of his existence.* Atheism, in this its proper sense, has probably never been adopted by plain, unlettered men. But, in this sense, it has been originated, defended, and glorified in, by many sects of Philosophers, in many ages, and in many countries.

To the account, which I have here given, of the result of human reasonings on the subject of this discourse, it may perhaps be objected, that *Pythagoras*, *Thales*, *Socrates*, *Plato*, and *Aristotle*, held, and taught, the doctrine of one God. I admit the assertion with some qualifications; but deny, that it is any objection to what I have said. It is well known, that *Pythagoras* and *Thales*, the founders of the *Ionic and Italic sects of Philosophy*, were the parents of all the Philosophy of the *Greeks*. It is equally well known, that these two men founded their doctrines, concerning subjects of this nature, chiefly on traditions, which they collected from different nations with intense assiduity. *Pythagoras*, particularly, travelled in quest of information in Theology and Morals into *Egypt*, *Judea*, *Babylon*, *Persia*, and *Hindoostan*. Of this we are directly informed by *Jamblichus*, *Diogenes Laertius*, and *Porphyry;* and, also, by *Hindoo records*, now in being. *Porphyry* particularly declares, that he resided seven years on Mount *Carmel*. *Thales*, also, whose mother was a *Phenician woman*, travelled into *Syria*, *Phenicia*, and probably into *Judea*. Some of the followers of these distinguished

men, adhered more, some less, and others not at all, to the system of doctrines, and the scheme of philosophizing, which they pursued. Those, who adhered most to their doctrines, and the traditions on which they were founded, entertained the most correct and defensible opinions concerning God. Those, who wandered farthest from them, entertained the most erroneous opinions. *Plato* and *Socrates* were of the former class; and *Aristotle* of the latter. *Plato* resided twelve years in *Egypt*, where he conversed extensively with both *Egyptians* and *Jews*. In different parts of his writings he has abundantly taught us, that his best doctrines were derived from traditions, holden by *Barbarians*, or *foreigners;* of whom he declares, in one place, that "they were more ancient than the *Greeks*, and lived nearer to the Gods." But even he, and his master *Socrates*, when they left their traditionary knowledge, began to wander from truth; and taught a collection of idle dreams, which they dignified with the name of Philosophy. The correctness of some of their doctrines, therefore, furnishes not the least objection against the observations which I have made.

It may be further objected, that in asserting the results of Reason, on this subject, to be what I have said, I lower the importance and usefulness of Reason to a degree beneath what Candour and Justice will warrant; and in a manner discordant with the very account, which I have given, concerning this subject, in the former part of the present discourse.

In answer to this objection, it is to be observed, that the account, which I have here given, is a mere recital of a matter of fact; namely, of what Reason has actually done relative to this doctrine; and not an explication of what Reason is able to do. With this subject I have, at present, no concern. Still I cannot but observe, that, when we appeal to Reason as a guide in subjects of Theology, its true character, as such a guide, can be estimated only by the decisions, which it has actually made. A man reasoning, as he actually is, under the real influence of his passions, prejudices, and biasses, and not, as he might be, divested of them, exhibits his true character as a reasoning being, and the actual extent, and power, of his Reason. This observation is equally true of all men. We are, therefore, to look only at what Reason has actually done, to learn what it can be expected to do.

Whether I have exhibited Reason in a more disadvantageous light than is just, I will leave my Audience to judge, after I have recited a very few, out of the endless multitude of absurdities, taught by Philosophy. The three* great arguments of *Ocellus Lucanus*, *Aristotle*, and the modern *Platonists*, against the Creation of the World, are these;

1st. *It is inconceivable, that things should ever have been in any other state, than that in which they are.*

* Stillingfleet's Origines Sacræ.

2dly. *There is no other way of Production, but generation.*

3dly. *God is not a free agent; but produced the World by a necessity of Nature.*

The first of these arguments is a falsehood; and, if it were true, would be ridiculously alleged; because it cannot in the remotest manner affect the point in question.

The second is a mere assumption, taken gratuitously from the birth and progress of Vegetables and Animals; and might with the same propriety be employed to prove, that men could never exist, unless they had been originally planted in the ground, and sprang up under the nutritive influence of the Earth, Rain, and Sunshine. Yet *Ocellus* was so satisfied of it, that he believed the Earth to have been thus generated; to have grown from an infantine to an adult size; and to be destined to decline, and dissolve, like an animal body; and all this, in direct contradiction to his main principle, the eternity of the World. *Aristotle*, who derived his doctrines on this subject from *Ocellus*, supposed, that, if the first matter were not created, it must have been generated by some preceding matter; and so on, *ad infinitum;* not perceiving, that he was here teaching a self-contradiction, for sound Philosophy. *Plato* taught that Υλη, or the Chaos, was the source of moral evil; and in this opinion was followed by a multitude of others. These doctrines, taught by Philosophers of the first rank, will, I presume, exonerate me from this charge, but I could fill a volume with specimens of a similar nature. I will only add to them that memorable declaration of Cicero; Nihil tam absurdum, quod non dixerit aliquis Philosophorum.* With respect to that part of the objection, that my own observations are discordant, I answer, that under the first head of discourse, I have alleged such arguments, as we, possessed of all the advantages derived from Revelation, are enabled to gain from the works of Creation and Providence. We already know the existence and character of God. These were the very points in question with the philosophers, whom I have named. The Revelation, to which we are indebted for this knowledge, has also enabled us to reason on these subjects in a manner, which was impossible to them, great as their abilities were. The arguments, which I have alleged, therefore, except perhaps the last, were probably never thought of by these men. Indeed, I do not know, that the third of them is found in any book whatever.

3dly. *No nation, which had lost the knowledge of one God derived from tradition, has been ever known to regain it, unless by the aid of Revelation.*

The Ancients plainly derived this knowledge from *Noah;* and, when they had lost it, fell, universally, into hopeless Polytheism. Nor is there a single exception to the remark, that, whenever Revelation has not revived this knowledge, mankind remain Polytheists to the present hour.

* Cicero de Nat. Deorum.

It is scarcely necessary for me to observe, that *Jews*, *Christians*, *Mohammedans*, and *Infidels*, have derived this knowledge wholly from the Scriptures.

4thly. *No account exists of any individual, who by the mere exercise of his Reason discovered the existence of one God.*

Immense multitudes of great and learned men have, in different ages, employed themselves laboriously in speculations of a theological nature. Had any one of them made the discovery in question; an event so important, so new, so singular, so honourable, could not have been unnoticed, or unrecorded, amid thousands of discoveries, of infinitely less consequence and distinction, carefully treasured up in the volumes of History. In truth, the idea of one perfect God is neither so obvious, nor so pleasing, to such minds as ours, as, when once lost, to be with any probability ever recovered again by the mere efforts of Reason. When known, and admitted, by the early descendants of *Noah*, it was soon lost; and without the direct aid of succeeding Revelation, would have been lost for ever. In the same manner, the *Israelites* wandered, notwithstanding the presence of the Shekinah, and the awful denunciations of their prophets, continually fulfilled before them; notwithstanding the wonderful miracles, which they beheld, and the terrible punishments which they suffered, almost yearly, into Polytheism and Idolatry. Such a God, as, when known by us, we are unwilling to acknowledge and to worship; a God, whom *we do not like to retain in our knowledge;* we cannot be supposed, with any probability, to seek after, when unknown; nor to search with earnestness for arguments to prove his being, or perfections.

III. *I shall now inquire, what has been the influence of Revelation on the reception, and continuance, of this doctrine.*

On this subject I observe

1st. *That God revealeth himself to Adam, and to the succeeding Patriarchs, down to the time of Moses.*

2dly. *In the written Revelation, begun by Moses, and completed by the succeeding Prophets and Apostles, the existence of the one perfect God is declared by himself, in every manner, from the beginning to the end; and made the foundation of all the doctrines, precepts, and ordinances, contained in the Sacred Volume.*

3dly. *This doctrine is directly attested by a great variety of miracles, wrought, either immediately or ultimately, as testimonies to this truth.*

4thly. *All the declarations, of this import, are proved by the character of the Testifier, as unfolded in the works of Creation and Providence.*

5thly. *The same declarations are evinced to be true by the character of the Testifier, as unfolded in the Scriptures.*

On this Character I shall have occasion to dwell particularly hereafter. At the present time, I can only observe summarily, that it is evinced by the perfect accordance of his declarations with facts:

Of his promises, with his performance of them;
Of his predictions, with their fulfilment;
Of his precepts, with absolute rectitude; and
Of his doctrines, so far as they can be examined by us, with truth.

It is also illustrated, in a glorious manner, by the perfect holiness of the scheme of worship prescribed, and of the system of Providence recorded.

In all these several ways, one Eternal, self-existent, immutable, and perfect JEHOVAH, is directly and abundantly declared on the one hand; and on the other, all Gods, beside him, are proved with the same evidence to be false and imaginary. The character, given of this great and awful Being, is such, as to banish from the mind the remotest suspicion of a second; even if a second were not directly denied. All perfections are ascribed to him; and all things declared to proceed from him, and to be under his absolute control. The Universe is exhibited as nothing in comparison with him, as holden in existence and harmony by his hand, and as formed to be the instrument of his glory.

This evidence, furnished by Revelation of the Unity of God, is such, that it preserved this doctrine among the Patriarchs; and in spite of all their tendencies to Idolatry, continued it among the *Jews*, till the *Babylonish* captivity; and after that event, established it beyond a question. Since the completion of the Christian Canon, there has been, among those, who have acknowledged its divine origin, scarcely a debate on the subject; Christians, with the exception of a few gross Heretics, who never deserved the name of Christians, having with a single voice acknowledged, and worshipped, the one JEHOVAH, the only living and true God. They have not probably regarded these arguments, as amounting to a logical demonstration; but they have justly regarded them, as removing every rational doubt, and as furnishing them, when *coming to God*, with an immoveable foundation *for believing* with full assurance, *that he is, and that he is the rewarder of all them that diligently seek him.*

Two REMARKS shall conclude this discourse.

1st. *This doctrine of the Unity of God strongly exhibits the wickedness of Mankind.*

The one perfect God was anciently, and fully, known to all Nations; and has been, since, often declared to a great part of the habitable World. Yet singular, solemn, and interesting, as this great object is, and impossible as it seems, that it should be lost by any man, who has once possessed it, it has still been wantonly forgotten, or wilfully rejected, by the great mass of mankind. In the place of JEHOVAH have been substituted Gods innumerable, sinful, stupid, blind, deaf, and dead; and these have been zealously worshipped in preference to the glorious Creator of all things. Man has made his Gods, and then prostrated himself before them.

The true and only reason of this conduct is, that men *loved not to retain God in their knowledge*. No higher proof of Corruption can be given than this. God is infinitely excellent and lovely. A good mind naturally regards him as infinitely more desirable than all other objects; and delights to contemplate, love, and obey him, in entire preference to all other enjoyments. A gross and guilty mind, therefore, is the sole cause of this apostacy and rebellion. The degree of this guilt is strongly seen in the completeness of the Apostacy. God has been totally banished; and creatures, totally opposite to him in every attribute, have been worshipped in his stead. Thus the mind has loved to recede as far as possible from its Maker; and not only refused its proper love and homage to him, but rendered them to the vilest and most unworthy of his creatures.

2dly. *From the observations made in this discourse, appears, in the strongest light, the necessity of Revelation.*

Revelation, as I have shown, originally began, and has always continued, the knowledge of the true and living God in the world. This is infinitely the most important of all knowledge, and the most absolutely indispensable to the well-being of Man. From God, all the good, which will ever be enjoyed, must be derived. But no permanent or solid good can be expected from him, unless he be pleased. To be pleased, he must be obeyed, and to be obeyed, he must be known. But without revelation he has never been known in this World. Thus to the attainment of permanent and solid good, Revelation is indispensably necessary, and infinitely important.

The love of God, also, is wholly built on the knowledge of his existence and character. But the love of God is the best of all characteristics, the foundation of all other good, and in itself the best good. Thus, in order to our moral and natural good, to our holiness and happiness alike, Revelation is supremely necessary to Man.*

* See these subjects further pursued in the Sermon on the Second Commandment.

SERMON V.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD—ETERNITY AND IMMUTABILITY OF GOD.

PSALM cii. 24—27.....*I said, O my God, Take me not away in the midst of my days: thy years are throughout all generations. Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the Earth; and the Heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.*

IN the preceding discourses, I have evinced, by such arguments, as appear to me conclusive, *the existence of God;* considered the *objections and schemes of Atheism and the influence of those schemes on the understanding, heart, and life, of Man, compared with that of the Christian System,* and examined the *manner, in which the Unity of God is presented to us by Reason, and by Revelation.* I shall now proceed to consider *such attributes of this great and glorious being, as demand a particular discussion.* Those, which naturally claim our first attention, are *his Eternity and Immutability;* subjects so intimately connected, as to be most advantageously considered together, in the manner in which we find them in the text.

After a series of discouraging and distressing thoughts on his own troubles, and repeated supplications to God for deliverance; and after various hopes, and predictions, of the kindness of God to himself, and to the Church, recited in the context; the Psalmist takes up his final consolation in the perfections, particularly in the power, wisdom, goodness, eternity, and immutability of his Creator. In the text, these are exhibited, as certain proof, that *the children of God shall endure for ever, and their seed be established before him.* In the sublime language of this divine writer, the foundation of the Earth and the formation of the Heavens are presented to us, as the handiwork of JEHOVAH; who is considered as building the Universe, as a man erects his own habitation. With no less magnificence is the same wonderful Agent represented, as taking these Heavens and folding them up as a decayed garment is folded by its owner; and laying them aside, as useless to any future purpose. In this imagery there is obviously a direct reference to the consummation of all things; when the present *Heavens and Earth, being set on fire, shall be dissolved, and flee away; and no place be found for them any more.* Mutable in their own nature, and destined to temporary purposes only, they will be continued while their use continues, and then perish for ever. To this changing character of even these great and splendid works of his hands, the Psalmist studiously contrasts the character of God. *They shall perish, but*

thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same; and thy years shall have no end.

In these words, is presented to us, not only a direct assertion, but a highly poetical, sublime, and glorious exhibition, of *the Eternity and Immutability of God;* strongly impressed on the mind by the contrast, which it forms to the vanishing character of these great works of his hands. The passage is indeed declared by the Apostle *Paul*, to be a description of the character, and agency, of the Lord Jesus Christ, the second person in the divine Trinity. But to us, who regard Christ as being unquestionably God, it has exactly the same import, as if applied to the Father, or to the Godhead at large. In this light I shall, therefore, consider it; and proceed, under its guidance, to examine these illustrious attributes of the Creator.

I. *God is Eternal; or, in other words, his existence is without beginning, or end.*

Of this doctrine the text is a direct assertion, and therefore a complete proof: but it is only one, among a vast multitude of such assertions in the Scriptures. No attribute of God is perhaps more frequently declared, more variously recited, or more universally diffused, throughout the sacred pages. In the very first verse of Genesis it is said, *In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth.* He existed, therefore, before the beginning of created things; or, in other words, from everlasting. In the last chapter of the Apocalypse, Christ solemnly declares this character of himself: *I am Alpha and Omega*, saith he, *the beginning and the ending, the first and the last.* In the xc. Psalm, and 2d. verse, the divine writer exclaims, *Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the Earth, and the World, even from Everlasting to Everlasting, thou art God. I lift my hand to Heaven*, says God, Deut. xxxii. and 40th, *and say, I live for ever. I am;* that is, I exist alike in all times and places, in Eternity and Immensity. JEHOVAH and *Jah:* that is, Existence illimitable by space or duration; are, you well know, the peculiar and incommunicable names of the Godhead; in accordance with which *the Eternal God*, and *the Everlasting God*, are current Phraseology of the Scriptures. From this source, then, it cannot be necessary to adduce any further proofs of the doctrine.

To this full evidence from the Scriptures, Reason subjoins her fullest attestations. That God existed before all things, has been heretofore, as I trust, sufficiently proved. The Universe was plainly derived from him, the first or original Cause. Consequently he was uncaused, underived, and, of course, from Eternity, or without beginning.

That God will for ever exist is plain, also, from Reason, beyond dispute. He cannot be supposed to terminate his own existence. Without insisting on the natural impossibility of this fact, it may be

safely asserted to be morally impossible. The Being, who has all good in his power, possession, and enjoyment, must be infinitely delighted with perpetual life, or existence. The contemplation of his perfections, designs, and works, the purpose of accomplishing eternally the supreme good of the Universe, the manifestation of his infinite beauty, glory, and loveliness, to the intelligent system, for ever rising, enlarging, and improving, and the complete assurance, that all his pleasure will be accomplished, constitute at once an aggregate of happiness, which must be regarded by him with immense complacency, and render his existence infinitely desirable in his own eyes.

It is scarcely necessary to observe, that creatures can in no way affect the existence, or the happiness, of God; for, being absolutely dependent on him, they can *be*, and *do*, nothing, but what he permits. From these considerations it is plain, that God must continue to exist for ever.

II. *God is immutable.*

By this I intend, that he is subject to no change in his manner of being, his perfections, thoughts, desires, purposes, or determinations.

This doctrine, also, is directly asserted in the text. *They shall be changed; but thou art the same.* It is also declared in various other passages of the Scriptures: *I am the Lord; I change not.* Mal. iii. 6. *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.* Jam. i. 17. *Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.* Heb. xiii. 8.

In these passages we are taught, not only that there is no *change* in God; but no *variableness;* no *capacity or possibility of change.*

Of this doctrine, also, Reason furnishes to him, who admits the existence of an Intelligent Cause of all things, an absolute demonstration. God gave being to all things. Of course he contrived them all. Every being, and every event, which has been, is, or will be, together with all their qualities and operations, existed in his mind; or, in the beautiful language of David, were *written in his book, and what day they should be fashioned, when, as yet, there was none of them.** They can, therefore, furnish to him not a single new thought, or idea. His thoughts were the cause of these beings and events. They, therefore, cannot be the cause of his thoughts. Hence it is manifest, that neither from himself, nor from his creatures, can God receive a single new thought. But, if no change can exist in his thoughts, it is obvious, that none can exist in his desires, designs, or determinations. New desires must be originated, and new designs and determinations formed, if they should exist at all, in consequence of some new views of the Mind,

* Psalm cxxxix. 16. Margin.

in which they exist; some change in the object viewed; or in the manner, in which the mind regards the object. As all the works of God are thus proved to have been, according to the declaration of *St. James*, Acts xv. 18, *known unto him from the beginning;* it is evident, that no such change is possible to him. His desires, designs, and determinations, must, therefore, be precisely the same for ever.

From these considerations it follows, that the Eternity of God is a totally different thing from that, which is ascribed to created, particularly to Intelligent, beings. The Scriptures attribute Eternity in a certain sense to Angels and Men; but this is wholly unlike the Eternity of God. All creatures change incessantly; and no idea can be formed of their duration, but that of a continual succession of changes. Their thoughts, desires, purposes, and determinations, together with their existence, are, and can be, no other than a continued series of changes. God, on the contrary, is not, and cannot be, the subject of the least possible change. His Eternity is, of course, all one present time. To him there is no past, and no future; nothing old, and nothing new; nothing gone, and nothing to come. Past and future are modes of created existence only; and have no application, no possible reference, to the Creator.

This glorious and sublime truth, though thus demonstrated by Reason, seems to have been first and alone communicated by Revelation. *One day*, saith *St. Peter*, *is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.* The Apostle does not here speak, as he has sometimes been supposed to speak, in comparative, but in absolute, language. He does not declare, that, because the Eternity of God is such an amazing duration, a thousand years will be so lost in this abyss, as to be comparatively the same thing with one day. On the contrary, he intended to declare what he actually declares; that a thousand years are to God exactly the same thing with one day. In his existence there is no long, nor short, duration; nothing fleeting; nothing successive. *His duration is a mere and eternal* Now. In our own existence, the clearest resemblance to the duration of God is found in the contemplation of a single, present moment of our being; without taking at all into view the succession even of that, which immediately follows.

This doctrine is, also, most sublimely exhibited in that singular declaration of Isaiah, *Thus saith* THE HIGH AND LOFTY ONE, *that inhabiteth Eternity*, that is, He, who fills Eternity at once; who inhabits it, just as he also inhabits Immensity. As he is present in all the regions of Immensity at once; and does not come from the West, pass by the present place of our existence, and go to the East; so he fills Eternity at once; and does not come from the Past, go by the Present, and enter the Future.

The same transcendently glorious mode of existence is also sub-

limely indicated in the incommunicable names of God, I AM, and JEHOVAH; that is, EXISTENCE, present in every place, and through every period of duration, alike.

REMARKS.

1st. *How great and glorious a character of God is presented to us by these perfections.*

Before the Mountains were brought forth, or ever he had formed the Earth and the World, even from everlasting to everlasting, he is God. Possessed of perfect excellence, contemplating with Infinite complacency his glorious attributes, and containing in himself a boundless sufficiency for the accomplishment of every thing great and desirable, he saw, that it was becoming his character to unfold his perfections, and communicate his goodness, to an endless and innumerable race of beings. From an Infinite height, he took a survey of the immeasurable vast of possible beings; and in an expansion without limits, but desolate and wild, where nothing was, called into existence with a word the countless multitude of Worlds, with all their various furniture. With his own hand he lighted up at once innumerable suns, and rolled around them innumerable worlds. All these he so dispersed, and arranged, as that all received light, and warmth, and life, and comfort; and all, at the same time, he stored, and adorned, with a rich and unceasing variety of beauty and magnificence, and with the most suitable means of virtue and happiness. Throughout his vast empire, he surrounded his throne with Intelligent creatures, to fill the immense and perfect scheme of being, which originally existed with infinite splendour in his own incomprehensible Mind. Independent of all possible beings and events, he sits at the head of this Universe, unchanged, and incapable of change, amid all the successions, tossings, and tumults, by which it is agitated. When empires are overthrown, or Angels fall; when Suns are extinguished, and Systems return to their original nothing; he is equally impassive and unmoved as when sparrows expire, or the hairs fall from our heads. Nothing can happen, nothing can be done, beyond his expectation, or without his permission. Nothing can frustrate his designs, and nothing disappoint, or vary, his purposes. All things, beside him, change, and fluctuate without ceasing. Events exist, and vanish. Beings rise, and expire. But his own existence, the thoughts which he entertains, the desires which he admits, the purposes which he forms, are *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.* Throughout the coming vast of Eternity, also, and the boundless tracts of Immensity, he sees with serene complacency his own perfect purposes daily and invariably advancing, with a regular fulfilment, towards their absolute completion. In its own place, in its own time, and in its own manner, each exists in exact obedience to his order, and in exact accordance with his choice. Nothing

lingers, nothing hastens: but *his counsel* exactly *stands*, and *all his pleasure will be* precisely *accomplished.*

2dly. *How necessary are these attributes to the character of God, as the Ruler of all things.*

By his Eternity this glorious Being is always in existence, to know and to bring to pass, to approve, or to condemn, to reward, or to punish, whatever he pleases, and whatever is done by his Intelligent creatures. As an Eternal Being, only, can he form plans of existence and administration, which shall extend through Eternity, and propose designs, invested with boundless perfection. As an Eternal Being, only, is he qualified to execute those designs in an everlasting progress, and to complete for ever the Infinite good, which he has begun.

By means of his Eternity only, is he able to offer to his creatures eternal rewards, and place before them infinite motives to obedience and virtue: rewards and motives, in their nature, differing immensely from all others. Without this attribute, with whatever wisdom the system of his works was planned, however bright and benevolent the designs, which he formed, however just and excellent his administrations, while they continued; still, at a period comparatively near, the splendour, and the promise, of this day-spring, would set in darkness; and the Sun of glory, and of good, be extinguished for ever. The Universe of matter and of minds, holden in being by his hand, would at an untimely day, find that hand withdrawn, and itself, with all the prospects formed, the hopes indulged, and the blessings enjoyed, by the unnumbered hosts of Intelligent beings, sink at once into the Abyss of Annihilation.

By his Immutability, God is possessed of immeasurable dignity and greatness; and fitted to be entirely feared, loved, honoured, and obeyed, by all his Rational creatures. The humble and imperfect dignity of created beings is entirely dependent for its existence on *stability of character.* Infinite dignity cannot belong to a character, which is not literally unchangeable. Created dignity is completely destroyed by fickleness: the least mutability would destroy that, which is uncreated. The least possible change would be a change from perfection to imperfection; a change infinite in itself, and infinitely for the worse. God, if changed at all, would cease to be God, and sink down from his infinite exaltation of being and character towards the humble level of imperfect creatures. How differently, in this case, would his nature, his laws, his designs, and his government, appear to us! Were the least change to commence, who can divine its consequences, or foresee their progress, and their end? Who can conjecture what would be its influence on his character, his designs, or his conduct? Who can foretel the effects, which it would produce on the empire which he has created, and on the innumerable beings by which it is inhabited? Who does not see, at a glance, that God could no longer be regarded with that voluntary and supreme veneration, now so confessedly his

due, because he had descended from his own infinite dignity, and was no longer *decked with majesty and excellency, nor arrayed in glory and beauty?* Who does not feel, that a serious apprehension of such a change would diffuse an alarm through all virtuous beings, and carry terror and amazement to the most distant regions of the Universe?

By his Immutability, God is qualified to form, and to pursue, one great plan of Creation and Providence; one harmonious scheme of boundless good; and to carry on a perfect system, in a perfect manner, *without variableness or shadow of turning*. An Immutable God, only, can be expected to do that, and nothing but that, which is supremely right and desirable; to make every part of his great work exactly what it ought to be; and to constitute of all the parts a perfect whole. In this immense work, one character is thus every where displayed; one God; one Ruler; one Sun of Righteousness; enlightening, warming, and quickening, the innumerable beings, of which it is composed. Diversities, indeed, endless diversities, of his agency, exist throughout the different parts of this work; but they are mere changes of the same light; the varying colours and splendours of the same glorious Sun.

Without this uniformity, this oneness of character, supreme dignity could not exist in the great Agent. Without this consistency, safety could not be found; reliance could not be exercised; by his creatures. God is the ultimate object of appeal to Intelligent beings; the ultimate object of confidence, and hope. However injured, deceived, or destroyed, by his fellow-creatures, every rational being still finds a refuge in his Creator. To him, ultimately, he refers all his wants, distresses, and interests. Whoever else may be deaf to his complaints, he still is assured, that God will hear. Whoever else withholds the necessary relief of his sufferings, or the necessary supplies of his wants, still he knows, that God will give. This consideration, which supports the soul in every extremity, is its last resort, its final refuge. Could God change; this asylum would be finally shut; Confidence would expire; and Hope would be buried in the grave. Nay, the immortal Mind itself, unless prevented by an impossibility, inherent in its nature, would languish away its existence, and return to its original Nothing.

It ought, here, by no means to be forgotten, that this glorious attribute, so absolutely indispensable to the government of all things, is in an illustrious degree manifested in that government. The *laws of Nature*, as they are customarily called; or, as they are, in much better language, styled in the Scriptures, *the Ordinances of Heaven;* are eminent and affecting displays of the Immutability of God. These laws are no other than rules, or methods, which God has formed for the guidance of all things, and in conformity to which he is pleased to act. Thus, by the Attraction of Gravitation, all the Atoms, of which the material Universe is com-

posed, are drawn towards each other, by a power, diminishing exactly in proportion to the increase of the squares of the distances between them. By this law, Atoms are united into Worlds, and Worlds into Systems. By this law, Moons perform their revolutions round the Planets; and Planets and Comets round the Sun. By this law, Summer and Winter, seed-time and harvest, so useful and so necessary to Mankind, regularly perform their successions. In the same regular manner the Planets revolve around their Axes; and furnish us with the delightful, and indispensable, vicissitudes of day and night. By other laws, equally uniform, the vegetable world is regulated from its first implantation in the soil to its full growth, and thence to its final decay. By others, still, Animals are born; arrive at maturity; decline; and die. The Mind, also, with all its faculties and operations, is by similar laws governed, and conducted towards a future Immortality. Thus, independently of the few miraculous events, originally inwoven in the great System, as useful, indubitable, and intentional, proofs of the immediate agency of God for particular, important purposes, all things are directed, each in its own manner, by fixed, uniform laws. These, like their Author, have been unchanged from their commencement. In the language of the *scoffers in the last days*, mentioned by *St. Peter*, *All things have continued as they were from the beginning of the Creation:* and instead of proving, according to their Atheistical suggestions, the failure of *the promise of his coming*, they clearly, and only, display the immutability of the Creator. This divine Attribute we are thus enabled to trace in the regularity, manifested by the progress of the vegetable, animal, and mineral kingdoms; in the steady confinement of the Ocean within its bounds; the permanency of the mountains; and the stability of the Earth. We read it, in lines which cannot be mistaken, in the exact and wonderful revolutions of the planets; in the unaltered position, aspect, influence, and glory, of the Sun; and in the uniform stations and brilliancy of the Stars. In all, one immutable purpose, one uniform agency, is every where seen; and must, if Reason be permitted to decide, be every where acknowledged.

This agency of God is remarkable in all cases, where we are able to understand its nature, for *its extensive efficacy; producing at the same time, and by the same thing, many important consequences.* In this respect it is in a great measure a contrast to *our agency;* which usually employs many things to bring to pass a single consequence. Thus the uniformity of this agency, together with the regularity and stability which it gives to the Universe at large, is *the foundation of almost all our knowledge.* From this source are derived the two great principles, that the same causes produce the same effects, and that similar causes produce similar effects. These principles are the basis of all our analogical reasoning, and of the analogy from which we reason. This analogy runs through Creation and Providence; and is the source, whence we derive almost all the

knowledge, which we possess, of the works of God. It extends alike to the natural and the moral world; and without it we could hardly be said to know any thing. In this manner, therefore, is displayed, not only the Immutability, but also in a glorious manner the Wisdom of God.

3dly. *By these attributes, the character of God is peculiarly rendered awful in the sight of wicked beings.*

By his Eternity he will exist for ever; and they cannot but know, that he will exist for ever, to execute his threatenings against all the impenitent workers of iniquity. By his immutability every hope is forbidden, that he will change any purpose, which he has formed, or fail to accomplish any declaration, which he has made. If he has ever been infinitely opposed to sin, and to sinners; this opposition cannot but be always, and unchangeably, the same. Of course, impenitence cannot rationally indulge a single hope of escaping from the punishment, which he has denounced. All rational beings are, from this source, presented, continually, with a character of God inconceivably awful. Dreadful, indeed, will God be, in this character, to the finally impenitent. How will *they abide in the day of his anger? How will they stand in the fierceness of his* eternal *indignation? A fearful looking for of judgment* must that be, which is derived from a full conviction, that all the threatenings, denounced by God in the Scriptures, against sinners dying without repentance, and faith in the Lord Jesus, will be exactly executed. At the same time, this awful character will contribute as much perhaps, if not more than any thing else in the divine kingdom, to preserve righteous beings in a state of unchanging obedience. Obedience cannot be the result of constraint and coercion. The number and nature, the power and presence, of motives, only, can produce, or continue, in the minds of moral beings, a disposition to obey. Among these, the immutable hatred of God to sin, and his immutable determination to execute vengeance on obstinate sinners, are pre-eminently cogent; and, united with his unchangeable love to holiness, and his unchangeable determination to reward it, may be regarded as the chief means of retaining virtuous beings in their allegiance and duty. At the same time, these motives have a primary and commanding influence, in the present world, to produce the awakening, conviction, and conversion, of wicked men. *Knowing the terrors of the Lord*, says the Apostle *Paul, we persuade men. Knowing the terrors of the Lord, Men* are actually *persuaded to turn from the error of their ways, and save their souls alive.*

4thly. *These attributes, especially, render God the object of supreme confidence to virtuous beings.*

Confidence, every man knows, can never, though chiefly an emotion of the heart, exist rationally, or permanently, unless firmly founded in the conviction of the understanding. Of course, the Being, who is rationally confided in, must be seen, with solid conviction, to possess those qualities, on which Confidence may safely

repose. Immutability of character, and the immutability of purpose and conduct resulting from it, are undoubtedly the only objects, in which rational beings can ultimately confide. A Being possessing these attributes must, if he loves holiness at all, love it invariably and for ever. That which he loves he will bless, of course. All his designs to reward those who possess it, must be unchangeable; all his declarations true; and all his promises exactly fulfilled. That faithfulness, by which they are fulfilled, is no other than *the Moral Immutability of God*, and an essential part of his infinite glory. On this character every virtuous being places an entire and safe reliance; *a hope, which can never make him ashamed.* However vast, however rich, however incredible in appearance, the promises of future happiness may seem to such minds as ours; we know, that they are the promises of Him, who can neither deceive, nor change; and that, therefore, every one of them will be carried into complete execution. According to these observations, the Immutability of God is directly asserted in the Scriptures to be the only foundation of safety to righteous men. *I am Jehovah*, says God in the passage already quoted from *Malachi; I change not; therefore, ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.* The backslidings and provocations even of the best men in this World are, in all probability, great enough to shake any purposes of kindness in any mind, which is not absolutely incapable of change. *The eternal God is* the true and final *refuge* of his children, only because he cannot change. Amid all their wanderings, their unbelief, their hardness of heart, and their multiplied transgressions, they have hope and security, because *his truth is as the great mountains, steadfast and immovable; and his promises endure for ever.*

Were God, contrary to this glorious character, to begin to change, what a mighty difference would be introduced into his being, his attributes, and his conduct! As he is possessed of all power, knowledge, and goodness, it is intuitively certain, that he cannot have more. Of course, any change must be a diminution of one or other of these attributes; and God must, in the case supposed, become less powerful, less knowing, or less good. How fearful to all virtuous beings in the Universe, must such a change be! How plain is it, that it might, for ought that appears, be the beginning of a course of mutability, endless in its progress! that God would ever after exist, as a successive changeable being; have no fixed purposes; and be devested of that unalterable faithfulness, on which, now, his Intelligent creatures rest with confidence and safety! What might not in this case be dreaded, in the everlasting change of his administrations, by all who love good, either in the Creator, or in his creatures!

5thly. *How great encouragements do these attributes to God furnish to Prayer!*

All encouragement to Prayer is derived from these two considerations; *that God has required it of us as a duty, and that he has*

promised blessings in answer to our prayers. Were he a mutable God, it would be impossible for us to know, that what was his pleasure yesterday, would be his pleasure to-day; that what he had required yesterday, he would not prohibit to-day; or that what he promised yesterday, he would be willing to perform at any future period.

It is impossible to determine, that a mutable God would not alter, not his conduct only, but his views, his principles of action, and the rules by which he governed his Creation. What he now loved, he might hereafter hate: what he now approved, he might hereafter condemn: what he now rewarded, he might hereafter punish. Of course, virtuous beings, now loved, approved, and rewarded, by Him, might one day be hated, condemned, and punished. Wicked beings, on the contrary, now the objects of his hatred, and declared to be hereafter the objects of his punishment, might one day become the objects of his friendship and favour; and triumph over the good in a manner equally unreasonable and dreadful.

Of these changes we could gain no possible knowledge, unless he should choose to communicate them to us by an immediate Revelation. From his mode of being, so diverse from ours, we could learn and conjecture nothing. From his past designs and administrations we could never argue, at all, to those which were future. Equally barren of instruction would be the Nature of things: for we could never be assured, that he would, or would not, regard this subject; or in what manner he would regard it at any period to come. Even if he should reveal his designs, and his pleasure; we could never be certain, that he had revealed them truly; and if we were assured of this fact, the Revelation could be of no material use, except for the moment. What is disclosed he might at any time revoke: and nothing could be known to be acceptable to him any longer, than during the moment, in which the disclosure was made. In the mean time, his power and his knowledge would still be such, that no hope could be indulged of either resistance or escape. Existence would in this case be, therefore, a dreadful succession of suspense; and immortal being, so far as we can discern, undeserving of a wish.

In such a situation of things, what encouragement would remain for prayer? The humble and faithful suppliant, coming to God with a firm belief, *that he is, and that he is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek him*, might find the manner of his praying, the spirit with which he prayed, and his prayers themselves, unacceptable and odious. The things heretofore most proper to be urged, might hereafter be the least proper. The considerations, which once ensured success, might at another time ensure rejection. The prime, the only, motives to prayer would, therefore, be taken away.

In the same manner the whole use of this duty, as it is intended to affect advantageously the character of the suppliant, would be

finally removed. The great use of prayer, in this view, is to establish in the heart a humble dependence on God, and a firm confidence in him. Confidence, as I have already observed, would, in the case supposed, be shaken and destroyed: and, without confidence, dependence would possess neither use nor worth. In the present state of things, these attributes constitute the proper, and the only proper, temper of the soul for the reception of blessings; the spirit which is eminently beautiful and lovely in the sight of God, and which is accordingly chosen by him as the proper object of his unchangeable favour. In the case supposed, these attributes could not be united; because Confidence could not exist: since the mind could not but perceive, that a changing God might, and probably would, in the infinite progress of things, become the subject of infinite change. If, therefore, it could feel satisfied, or safe, for a hundred or a thousand years, it would still rationally fear, that at some unknown and more distant period of Eternity, the order of all things would be inverted; and its former obedience and former prayers rise up at this dreaded season in the character of crimes, and prove the cause of its future suffering. Dependence, therefore, existing solitarily, would degenerate into anxiety and alarm; and, instead of being the means of union between the soul and its Maker, would become a wall of dreadful separation.

The Immutability of God has often, but erroneously, been imagined to involve *Inexorability* in his character. The Scriptural Account of this great Being is, on the contrary, that he is immutably exorable; or, in other words, that he is immutably disposed to hear and answer Prayer. His own words are, *Every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.* This and this only, is his true character, agreeably to which the system of his dispensations is immutably established. In this system, infinite encouragement is holden out to every suppliant, and to every faithful Prayer. Here the petitioner knows, that what is once acceptable to God will always be acceptable; and that the things, which he has once required, he will require for ever. His faith, therefore, is built on the Rock of Ages; and, with whatever violence the rains may descend, the winds drive, or the floods beat, their rage and fury will assault him in vain.

SERMON VI.

OMNIPRESENCE AND OMNISCIENCE OF GOD.

PSALM CXXXIX. 1—12 ....*O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting, and my up-rising; thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path, and my lying down; and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.*

IN my last discourse, I considered the *Eternity and Immutability of God.* As motivity, or active power, the power by which all motion and action are originated, cannot be conceived to reside in any other than an intelligent being; *the Knowledge of God* becomes naturally the next subject of investigation. As *his Presence* is most intimately connected with his Knowledge; it will be advantageously united with it in a discourse of this nature. Accordingly these attributes are frequently joined together by the divine writers.

In the text, *the Knowledge and Presence of God*, usually termed, from their extent, *his Omniscience and Omnipresence*, are in the fullest manner declared. The Psalm, of which the text is a part, is one of the most remarkable Poetical compositions, ever seen in this World; and, did the time permit, would richly repay the labour of an extensive, critical investigation. In comparison with it, the most admired odes of heathen antiquity are the mere effusions of children.

My audience cannot but have observed, that the manner, in which these perfections are attributed to God, is not that of plain, logical discussion. The subject is assumed as a thing granted and acknowledged; as a thing equally removed beyond debate and doubt. The writer, animated with the most enthusiastic ardour, of which a sublime imagination is capable, seizes these great themes of his attention; and, amid his enraptured contemplation of them, pours out a succession of the boldest and loftiest conceptions, that were ever uttered concerning these subjects. Himself, his thoughts, his words, his actions, he declares, with a mixture of awe and exultation, to be all perfectly known to God. From this knowledge, he at the same time informs us, there is no possible escape. Should he ascend into Heaven, or make his bed in Hell; should he, borne

on the sun-beams, hurry, with their celerity, into the distant regions of the West; still God would be present in all these and all other places alike. Were he still further to place his hope of a secure retreat in the darkness of night; he perceives the night to shine in the presence of God as the day, and the darkness and the light to be both alike unto him.

With these views of the Psalmist, those of every other divine writer on this subject exactly conspire; and all, with a single voice, attribute these perfections to Jehovah. Thus *Jeremiah*, xxiii. 23, 24: *Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off?*

Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him? Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?

The heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee. Great is the Lord, his understanding is infinite.

In accordance with this doctrine only, *is all our obedience*, particularly *our worship*, prescribed in the Scriptures. We worship and obey God every where; and are commanded thus to do; because God is every where present, to see, and know, and accept our services, to protect our persons, and to supply our wants. It ought to be here observed, *that these attributes are directly ascribed to all the persons of the Trinity.* Thus CHRIST says of himself, *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them.* Again, *Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.* *Peter* says to him, John xxi. 17, *Lord, thou knowest all things.* *Christ* says of himself, *And all the churches shall know, that I am he, who searcheth the reins and the hearts*, Rev. ii. 23. And again, Mat. xi. 27, *No one knoweth the Son, but the Father, neither knoweth any one the Father, save the Son, and he, to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.*

The Omnipresence of the Spirit of Grace is emphatically asserted in the question, contained in the seventh verse of the text; *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?* especially, as connected with the answers following. *The Spirit of Glory and of God resteth upon you*, that is, Christians universally, saith *St. Peter*, 1 Epist. iv. 14. *Your body*, saith *St. Paul* to Christians, *is the temple of the Holy Ghost*, 1 Cor. vi. 19; and, *The Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God*, 1 Cor. ii. 10.

These attributes of God are also demonstrated, and holden out continually to our inspection, by *Reason and Experience.*

In every part of the Universe, to which we turn our eyes, we discern in the inanimate, animated, and intelligent, worlds, most evident proofs of an agency, which it is impossible rationally to attribute to any other being but God. In the motions and powers of the Elements; in the growth, structure, and qualities, of Vegetables and Animals; and in the thoughts, volitions, and actions, of Minds, we perceive a casual influence, and efficiency, totally distinguished from every other; as distant from that of man, as the

agency of man from the movements of an Atom. This character is never mistaken by Savages; nor even by children, when once informed of the character of God.

This agency is conspicuous in all places, at all times, and in all things; and is seen in the Earth, the Ocean, the Air, and the Heavens, alike. Equally evident is it in the splendour and life-giving influences of the Sun; in the motions, order, and harmony, of the Planetary system; and in the light and beauty of the Stars; as in the preservation, direction, and control, of terrestrial things.

No agent can act where he is not. As, therefore, God acts every where; he is every where present. In this agency, contrivance and skill, to which no limits can be set, are every where manifested: it is of course, equally, and unanswerably, a proof of the *Omniscience* of God.

This attribute of God is also inferred, with absolute certainty, from his Omnipresence. As God exists every where, so he is in all places the same God; all eye; all ear; all intellect. Hence it is impossible, that he should not know every thing, in every place, and at every time.

Again: all things are derived from God; and received their nature, attributes, and operations, from his *contrivance*, as well as from his *power*. All things were, therefore, known to him, antecedently to their existence. Nor are *possible* things less perfectly known to him, than those which are *actual*. Nothing is possible, but what he can bring to pass; and whatever he can bring to pass he cannot but know.

REMARKS

1st. *How majestic, awful, and glorious, a manifestation of God is furnished to us by this passage of Scripture, thus considered!*

We are here taught, that God is essentially present to all places, and to all beings. We are taught, that he is equally *at hand, and afar off;* that he is equally present in this world, and in the heavens; that he dwells alike throughout the universe of being, and the uninhabited regions of Immensity. In all places, also, he is JEHOVAH; the same GOD; possessing the same attributes; and operating with the same wonderful agency. From the same passage we also learn, irresistibly, that he comprehends, at the same moment of time, and with the same intuitive survey, every thing possible and actual; that Eternity past and future is perfectly present to his eye; and that no distance of place, or duration, can be any thing to him; that no retreat can conceal, and no darkness cover, any being, or event, from his sight. The mind of man is here exhibited as equally open to his view with the body; the thoughts and affections, as the words and actions; *Hell*, as equally *naked* and present to him, as Heaven; and *the destroyer*, and the Seraph, as alike without a *covering*. It is indubitably certain, therefore, that he is able to attend, and actually attends, to all

things at the same moment; to the motions of a seed, or a leaf, or an atom; to the creepings of a worm, the flutterings of an insect, and the journeys of a mite; to the excursions of the human mind, and the efforts of an Archangel; to the progress of a world, and the revolutions of a System.

2dly. *How necessary are these attributes to the government of all things.*

This interesting article may be advantageously illustrated in the following particulars. In the

First place, *God is eminently qualified by these attributes for the preservation of all things.*

The Universe is a work of stupendous greatness; composed of worlds innumerable by us; and inhabited by beings, still more emphatically surpassing number. The characters, and kinds, of these beings, are incomprehensibly various; and their circumstances, beyond measure, more various. As these are hourly existing, and advancing in an endless progress, they demand a providence minute, comprehensive, and enduring without a limit.

Every one of these is, also, a part of one immense whole. Each has its station allotted to it; the part which is to act, the duties which it is to perform, and the purposes to which it is intended to be subservient; together with powers, and circumstances, suited to the accomplishment of them. Should one being fail of fulfilling its appointed end; a chasm, a defect, would of course be found in the System, which could not be remedied. No finite measure can correctly determine the importance and danger of such a defect, however minute it may seem to a created understanding. Even the improper fall of a leaf, nay, the improper position of an atom, may, for ought that appears, be followed by consequences injurious, in the course of Eternity, both to the character of the Creator and the good of his creatures. The motions of a fly are capable of terminating the most important human life, or of changing all the future designs of a man, and altering the character, circumstances, and destiny, of his descendants, throughout time and Eternity. Such defects may, unless prevented by him, continually take place in every part of his vast kingdom. It is, therefore, indispensably necessary, that he should be present to every being, at every moment, to perceive, and regulate, every event; to further every part of his infinite designs; and to prevent every obstruction and failure. An exact, unremitted attention, on his part, is necessary to the greatest and to the least alike; a knowledge intimate, entire, and perfect, of all their relations, changes, and circumstances.

Of this attention, this consummate knowledge, the presence of God is the real foundation. In consequence of his presence in all places, he sees, that every thing is contained in its own proper sphere of being, and action; and discerns every approach towards exposure, and towards defect. Hence his great work is always

guarded, advanced, and prospered. In this world, his presence, attention and knowledge, are indispensable, to renew, refine, and strengthen in virtue, the souls of his children; to guide them in the path of duty; to relieve their distresses; to supply their wants; and to brighten their hopes of a blessed immortality.

Equally indispensable is it, to advance the general cause of truth and righteousness; to befriend his Church in all its interests; to prevent *the gates of hell* from *prevailing against it;* to confine rebellion within the destined bounds; and to inflict the proper judgments on the works of iniquity. In a word, his presence is indispensable here, *to bring light out of darkness, order out of confusion, and good out of evil.*

In the world of punishment his presence is equally necessary, to confine the prisoners of his wrath; to render to every impenitent sinner the reward due to his crimes; to teach the abominable nature, and the deplorable consequences, of sin; and to show his unchangeable hatred of iniquity.

In the various worlds, where virtue and happiness reside, he is necessarily present, to inspire, invigorate, and quicken, the obedience of their inhabitants; to distribute the innumerable and diversified rewards, which he has annexed to obedience; and cause *to arise and shine* the endless varieties of beauty and loveliness, of which that happy spirit is capable.

In Heaven, the brightest and best of those worlds, he is indispensably present, to perfect that glorious system of virtue and happiness, which he has ordained through the mediation of his Son, and promised to all the Redeemed. There he has instituted a perfect scheme of dispensations, which is the consummation, and the crown, of all his works. There every inhabitant receives, and loves, and keeps, his own place, duties, and enjoyments; and consecrates with all his heart, without weariness, and without end, his exalted faculties, and immortal life, to the sublime purposes of glorifying his Maker, and advancing the universal good. To this end, God there lives in every being, in a manner wholly peculiar; and diffuses a peculiarly quickening influence through every object. Hence *the River*, which *proceeds from his throne*, is styled *the Water of Life;* and *the trees*, which grow on its banks, *bearing twelve manner of fruits*, are named *Trees of Life*. The body he animates with vigour, youth, and beauty, which cannot decay: the mind he informs with a divine and supernal quickening, which empowers it to advance without intermission, and with incomprehensible celerity, in knowledge, virtue, and enjoyment. In that world, God unfolds himself in infinite diversities of beauty, glory, and majesty; enables them *to see eye to eye, and to behold his face in righteousness*. In that world he exhibits, with clear and unalterable conviction, that the great work, which he has made, the system of dispensations, which he has chosen, is a perfect work; a system of perfect wisdom and goodness; in which no real good is wanting.

and into which nothing, which upon the whole is evil, is admitted. Particularly, he manifests the transcendent wonders of forgiving, redeeming, and sanctifying love; and the supreme desirableness of restoring, through the Redeemer, apostate sinners to the character and privileges of the children of God. Here, also, he unfolds in a perfect manner the inherent tendency of virtue to make Intelligent minds wiser, better, and happier, for ever.

It is hardly necessary to remark, that, unless God were present in heaven, all these divine purposes must necessarily fail of being accomplished.

Secondly. *The presence of God is equally indispensable, to supply the innumerable wants of his creatures.*

In every other world, as well as in this, every creature is dependent on God *for life, and breath, and all things.* Here, as we well know, *all creatures wait upon God, that they may receive their* supplies *in due season. That which he giveth them they gather: he openeth his hand, and satisfieth the wants of every living thing. He hideth his face; they die, and return to their dust.* These wants are endless in number, kind, and degree; exist every moment in every creature; are natural and spiritual; and respect alike both time and Eternity. When God gives, creatures receive: when he withholds, they are destitute. Where he *is* not, where he *gives* not, there good is never found. But, if these wants are to be supplied, they must be known; and, to know them, he must be present. Hence he must exist in every place, and in every being.

Thirdly. *His presence is indispensable, that he may know the Moral Characters of his Intelligent creatures.*

The actions of Intelligent beings are of a moral nature; or, in other words, deserving of praise or blame, reward or punishment. These are originated in the soul; and in the soul receive their whole moral character. Hence, in order to know the true nature of the conduct of such beings, God must continually reside in every soul, to discern the rising motives, the commencing affections, and the infant designs; to trace them through their progress, and to witness their completion. In this manner *he searches the hearts, and tries the reins;* and discerns, intuitively, the moral nature of all the conduct. All words he is present to hear, and all actions to behold. In this manner is he perfectly qualified to perform those great acts of governing the universe, and judging, and rewarding, his Intelligent creatures, *according to their works.*

3dly. *From the Omniscience and Omnipresence of God it is evident, that all things must come to pass either by his choice, or permission.*

As God is thus ever present in all places, and to all things; it is impossible, that he should not know whatever comes to pass, or is about to come to pass. But of every possible thing it is truly said, that its existence is, upon the whole, either desirable or undesirable. If it be desirable, or undesirable, God cannot but be perfectly ac-

quainted with its true nature, in either case; because he cannot fail to see every thing as it is. If he sees any thing to be, upon the whole, desirable; it is impossible, that he should not choose its existence; if he sees it to be undesirable; he cannot but choose that it should not exist. If there is in the nature of things a foundation, for preferring the existence of any thing to its non-existence; he cannot fail to discern this fact, and choose accordingly, that it should exist: and thus, *vice versa*. Whatever he chooses should not exist, cannot. Whatever he chooses should exist, must exist of course.

The same things are equally true, of the time and place, modes and circumstances, events and attributes, in connexion with which beings exist, as of the beings themselves; for there is nothing, beside his choice, which could originally give these, or any of them, birth. If, for example, it has appeared to him good to endue creatures, in any case, with such powers, as constitute an efficiency properly their own, and permit them afterwards to accomplish by this efficiency whatever will result from the nature and tendency of such powers; then this will be the mode, in which such creatures will exist, and act; and in this manner all those things, which result from their existence and action, will take place. Should he, at the same time, see it to be desirable, that himself should exert a controlling, regulating, coinciding, or assisting, influence, with regard to the agency of such beings; then this influence will for the same reason be exerted.

But, whatever be the manner, in which events are introduced into existence, whether by his single, immediate agency, or by the instrumentality of created beings, nothing can take place, which is contrary to, or aside from, his choice, or permission: unless something can escape his knowledge, or overcome his power.

4thly. *It is evident, from what has been said, that God attends to every Individual being, and his concerns, as perfectly, as if there were no other being.*

Not a small number of men, and among them many Philosophers, and, what is more strange, many professed Christians, have believed, and taught, that God cannot be supposed to attend to the concerns of Individuals; but that he regards only the greater affairs of empires, worlds, and systems.

This opinion springs, not improbably, from three sources: first, *Want of examination:* secondly, *an apprehension, that it is beneath the dignity of God to regard things of such minuteness:* thirdly, *a dread in the mind of such attention, on the part of God, to its own concerns, because they will not bear divine inspection.*

The first and third of these articles need no comment. The second appears to have arisen from the strong propensity in man *to think God almost*, if not *altogether, such an one as himself;* and is fraught with the rankest absurdities. If it is beneath the dignity of the Godhead to regard individuals; how much more was it be-

neath his dignity to make them? The end, for which they were made, is unquestionably more important than themselves, who were only means to it; and claims proportionally a higher regard. Individuals also compose empires, and worlds, and systems. If, then, God do not attend to the concerns of individuals, he must cease of course to attend to those of empires, worlds, and systems; since the affairs of these great collections of rational beings are only aggregates, made up of the affairs of individuals.

The concerns of one individual often constitute the hinge, on which all the great concerns of empires are turned. Thus the concerns of *Cyrus*, *Alexander*, and *Cæsar*, changed in a great measure the situation of those states, of which they were sovereigns; and put a new face on a great part of the habitable world. Even the conduct of *Ravillac*, altered in a great measure the state, not only of *France*, but of *Europe*. Nay, from an early period of their Republic, the state of the whole *Roman* Empire, and consequently of a great part of mankind down to the present day, was essentially changed by the cackling of a goose.

Again; God created all individuals for certain ends, in themselves good and desirable, and of course designed by him to be accomplished. But these ends cannot be accomplished, unless his Providence supply the powers and faculties, and regulate all the actions and events, necessary to their accomplishment; and would, therefore, be frustrated, were he not always present, and always attentive to them, for these purposes.

Every individual, also, is a part, and exactly a desirable, proper, and necessary part, of the great work, which God has begun. If then one should fail, the whole would be disordered; and consequences would be produced, the extent, and mischiefs of which, no mind, less than infinite, could comprehend.

Each of these arguments refutes this doctrine. But we need not recur to them, or to any of them, for this refutation. The nature of God proves the doctrine to be false. He is every where present; and is all eye, all ear, all consciousness. Of course he cannot but attend to every thing, and know every thing. This is essentially, and unchangeably, his character. He can no more fail of regarding an insect, than an angel; an atom, than a world. As we, when our ears are open, cannot but hear; when our eyes are open, cannot but see; when our minds are directed to any object, cannot but perceive; so God, who is all mind, all perception, cannot but perceive all things. Among all things he cannot but perceive whatever is preferable, or upon the whole desirable, in the least, as well as in the greatest; and cannot, without denying his nature, fail to choose its existence, rather than that, to which it is thus preferable. The least, also, is as truly necessary and indispensable to the whole, as the greatest; and cannot, therefore, fail to be chosen, and accomplished.

Besides, Experience unanswerably proves the doctrine which I

have asserted. None but God can form, or preserve, direct, or regulate, an atom, a leaf, a mite, or an insect, any more than an angel, a world, or the Universe. We see his power, wisdom, presence, and agency, in these least things, as truly, and as constantly, as in the greatest; and so clearly discern it to be the agency of an infinite hand, as to be incapable, when we open our eyes, of mistaking it for any other. In perfect harmony with these observations, the Scriptures declare, that *God clothes the grass of the field; continues the life, and directs the death of sparrows; and numbers the hairs of our heads.* What employment can, according to the opinions of those who contend against this doctrine, be less suitable than these, to the dignity of God? Yet these, he has been pleased to declare, are things, about which he is employed. The truth is, this universal attention to the several parts of the Universe is infinitely glorious to his character. To be able to attend to the infinite multitude of beings and events, at the same, and at all times; to render an entire regard to the least, without lessening at all the attention due to the greatest; to be able to see, that every individual continues in his proper place and circumstances, answering the proper end of his being; to secure in this manner the well-being of the whole; and to do all this without weariness, or confusion; is to possess the highest state of being, of dignity, and of glory.

5thly. *From the above considerations, how solemn, how affecting, does our own existence appear!*

This use of the doctrines, contained in the text, is made particularly, and in the most illustrious manner, by *David*, throughout the psalm, from which it is taken. It cannot, therefore, fail to be profitably made by ourselves.

From the observations contained in the preceding part of this discourse, it is evident, that we are, at all times, and in all places and circumstances, surrounded by God. In our walks, amusements and business, at home and abroad, when we are asleep and when we are awake, God is with us as really, and as evidently as we are with each other. Every thought in our own minds, every *word on our tongues*, every action of our hands, is perfectly *naked to his all-seeing eye.* Of what amazing importance is it, then, that these thoughts, words, and actions, *be acceptable in his sight;* be such, as we should be willing to have him witness; such, as he can approve, justify, and reward! Those certainly are the only wise, the only prudent, human beings, who continually remember this great truth; and who at all times, in their amusements as well as in their serious business, say in their hearts, *Thou God seest me.* No consideration is so solemn, so affecting, so useful, as this. None possesses the same influence to restrain the hands, or the heart, from sin; to produce, preserve, or quicken, obedience; or to awaken, unceasingly, the most profitable attention of the soul to its everlasting welfare, or its remembrance of that awful judgment, where all its thoughts, words, and actions, will be displayed in *the*

light of God's countenance, and become the reason, and the measure, of its final reward.

On the contrary, how imprudent, how sottish, how delirious, is the conduct of him, who habitually forgets the presence of God; of whom it is truly said *that God is not in all his thoughts*; and who, *settled upon his lees*, quietly persuades himself, that *the Lord will not do good, neither will the Lord do evil.* This man has either negligently, or intentionally, removed from his mind the chief source of virtuous conduct, the well-spring of hope, the great security against temptation, the prime preventive of sin. He is left unguarded, therefore, in circumstances infinitely dangerous; and voluntarily exposes himself to evils of infinite magnitude. Compared with this man, the prodigal, who causelessly squanders a throne and an empire, is a miser; and the soldier, who, when the enemy surrounds the citadel, sleeps at his post, is a faithful watchman.

6thly. *Let every sinner remember, that God is present at the commission of all his crimes.*

When thoughts of rebellion, profaneness, and ingratitude, arise in the soul; when thoughts of pride, envy, malice, deceit, injustice, and cruelty deform; and when thoughts of intemperance, levity, and lewdness, debase it; then God is in the polluted, guilty mind, searching its secret chambers, and laying open to the full sunshine all the hiding places of iniquity.

When the sinners, who are in this house, rise up in rebellion against their Maker; when you murmur against his government, lay your sins to his charge, impeach his justice, mercy, and truth, and wish that he were to exist and rule no more: When you form impure, unjust, and fraudulent designs; proceed to actions of violence and cruelty; and become *stout-hearted*, and therefore eminently *far from righteousness:* when you devise false doctrines and systems, to lead yourselves, and others, astray; deceive yourselves, with arguments formed to justify sin, and flatter conscience into quiet and security: when you oppose the truth of God; dishonour his name; revile his Son; grieve his Spirit; and profane his Sabbath and Sanctuary, his commands and ordinances: when finally, you ensnare, pollute, and destroy, others as well as yourselves, by carrying all your evil designs into a guilty and dreadful execution: then, however you may imagine yourselves concealed by the shades of solitude, or the curtains of midnight, from the view of every eye, God is present, sees, hears, and takes an account of all your thoughts, words, and actions. Then *His eye, as a flame of fire*, lights up a clear and searching day in your souls, and around your steps; and shows in sun-beams the iniquities, which you devise, utter, and perpetrate.

7thly. *Let every Child of God remember, also, that his Creator is equally present with all his conduct.*

The Christian may be in his own view; he may be in fact; poor, ignorant, little, and insignificant. When he reviews himself he

may not unnaturally exclaim, *I am a worm, and no man:* when he reviews his services, he may pronounce them too worthless to be remembered of God: when he reviews his sins, he may believe them so great, as to cut him off from every reasonable hope of a share in the divine attention. But, notwithstanding his insignificance, fears, and doubts, he is not forgotten here; and will not be forgotten *in the day, when God makes up his jewels.* The tears, which he has shed; the prayers, which he has offered up; the *two mites*, which he has consecrated to God; the *cup of cold water, which he has given to a* fellow *disciple;* were neither unnoticed nor unregarded. God was present, when each act of humble and sincere obedience was performed; marked it with his eye; recorded it in his book; and will acknowledge it at the final day.

From this constant, kind, and merciful regard of his Maker, no situation, no circumstances, will preclude him, even for a moment. However lowly, however solitary, however forgotten of mankind, his course through life may be; himself and his interests, his wants and his woes, are tenderly, as well as continually, regarded by his God.

In seasons of sorrow, of sickness, bereavement, or desertion; when he has lost his parents, or his children; or is forsaken by his former friends and companions: when the world begins to seem to him a desert, and life to be a burden: God is then at hand, *his Father, and everlasting Friend; and will be better to him than sons and daughters.* The Physician of the body, as well as of the soul, will administer healing to his diseased frame; pour the balm of consolation into his wounded spirit; and enable him to say, *Why art thou cast down, O my soul! and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.*

When those around him become hostile to his character, and to his religion; when he himself is hated, despised, and persecuted: when for help he looks through the world in vain, and is ready to sink in the gulf of despair: let him remember, that God has been present, to behold all his sufferings; and will effectually guard him from every fatal evil. He may indeed be *persecuted, but* he will *not* be *forsaken;* he may be *cast down, but* he will *not* be *destroyed.* Let him also remember, that *his afflictions*, though they may seem heavy, are *but for a moment*, and are, therefore, really *light;* and that they will *work for him an exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*

In seasons of temptation, when his resolution to resist, his fortitude to endure, his patience to suffer, his wisdom to devise means of escape, and his diligence and faithfulness to use them, *fail and decline:* or even when, immersed in sloth and security, he ceases to watch over himself, and to guard against impending evil: God still is present, to supply all his wants; to renew his vigour; to support his yielding constancy; to awaken in him new vigilance; to quicken in him a contrite sense of his backsliding; to deliver him from the

unequal contest; and to bless him with returning hope, peace, and safety.

When self-confidence, self-flattery, and self-righteousness, inflate, deform, and betray him, when no Christian friend is near, to know, to pity, or to rescue him: God, even then, is present, to humble, to guide, and to restore him: and to enable him to find a safe path over the otherwise insurmountable obstacles to his continuance in the way of life.

Does he, with other humble followers of the Redeemer, *mourn in Zion* the hidings of God's face, his own backslidings, or the depression and sufferings of his fellow-christians; and feel, as if both himself and the Church were deserted and forgotten? Let him remember, that, although his heavenly Father *hath smitten him for his sins with a rod, and for his iniquities with stripes; yet his covenant he will not take away, nor forget his mercy;* that *the walls of Zion are continually before him;* and *that she is graven on the palms of his hands;* that, *although a woman may forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb; yet will her Redeemer not forget his Church;* and that *He will keep her in the hollow of his hand, and preserve her as the apple of his eye.* Let him remember, that JEHOVAH will soon *lift upon him,* and his fellow-saints, *the light of his countenance;* and *will soon appoint, unto them all, beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.*

Is he come to a dying bed? Is Eternity, with all its amazing scenes, beginning to be unveiled? Is his final trial ready to commence? Is his account even now to be given; his sentence to be pronounced; and his endless allotment to be fixed? Behold on the throne of Judgment that glorious person, who has promised, *that he will never leave him, nor forsake him. He* is the Judge, by whom he is to be tried; the Rewarder, by whom his destiny is to be fixed for ever. This divine Redeemer will now remember him as one of those, for whom he died; as one of those, for whom he has made unceasing *intercession before the throne of the Majesty in the Heavens.*

8thly. *What an affecting and amazing display will be made of the Omniscience of God, at the last Judgment!*

On this solemn day, all mankind *will be judged according to the deeds done in the body.* That these may be the foundation of *the righteous judgment of God,* it is indispensable, that they should be known clearly and certainly: the sins, together with all their aggravations and palliations; the virtues, with all their diminutions and enhancements. To the same end it is equally necessary, that the system of retribution should also be perfectly comprehended; so that every administration of reward, both to the righteous and the wicked, should, throughout Eternity, be measured out to each individual exactly as his whole character demands. Of course, the knowledge, which will here be indispensable, will be a perfect

comprehension of this system, together with all the moral conduct, and all the circumstances, of the innumerable beings, who will be judged. The display of this knowledge, it is evident, will be the greatest display announced by the Scriptures, and infinitely greater than any other, conceivable by the human mind. This display will be, also, far more affecting than any other: for on it will depend all the immortal concerns of the innumerable children of *Adam*. Yet such a display will certainly be made, to such an extent, as to exhibit God in the character of an upright judge, an impartial dispenser of good and evil to his creatures; as to stop every mouth, and force every heart to confess, *that he is just when he judgeth, and clear when he condemneth.*

What manifestations of the human character will then be made! How different will be the appearance, which pride, ambition, and avarice, sloth, lust, and intemperance, will wear in the sight of God, in the sight of the assembled universe, and in the sight of those, who have yielded themselves up to these evil passions, from that, which they have customarily worn in the present world. How low will the *haughty man be bowed down!* How will the splendour of power and conquest set in darkness! How will the golden mountains of opulence melt away, and leave the dreaming possessor *poor*, and *naked*, and *miserable*, and *in want of all things*. How will the sensualist awake out of his momentary vision of pleasure, and find it all changed to *vanity and vexation of spirit!* How little, in innumerable instances, will the worldly great then appear! How contemptible the renowned! How weak the powerful! How foolish *the wise men, and disputers, of this world!* On the contrary, with what confidence and joy will the poor, despised, humble Christian *lift up his head*, and take his proper place in the great scale of being, because he *beholds his redemption arrived!* Here, first, his character will be openly acknowledged, and his worth confessed. Last in the present world, he will be numbered among the *first* in the world to come. A feeble, faded, half extinguished lamp on this side of the grave, he will *shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of his Father.*

How differently will our own characters appear from what we imagine them to be, during our present life. Here most of our sins are forgotten; there they are all recorded in the book of God's remembrance. Here vast multitudes of them are concealed; there they will all be displayed in the open day. Here they are often mistaken by self-flattery for virtues; there they will be irresistibly seen in all their native deformity. How delightful will it then be to find, that they have been *blotted out* by the divine mercy *as a thick cloud;* that they have been expiated by the blood of the Redeemer! What a consolation, what transport, will it be to find, that, numerous and great as our iniquities have been, yet our whole character was such in the eye of the heart-searching God, as to entitle us, through the merits of Christ, to a reward of endless life and glory!

SERMON VII.

OMNIPOTENCE AND INDEPENDENCE OF GOD.

GENESIS xvii. 1.—*I am the Almighty God.*

IN my last discourse, I considered *the Omnipresence and Omniscience of God.* The next subject in the natural order of discussion is *his Almighty Power.*

In the text, this attribute is asserted directly by God himself to *Abraham*, when he renewed with him the covenant of grace, and instituted the sacrament of circumcision. In a manner equally explicit, are similar declarations made throughout every part of the Scriptures.

The Omnipotence of God is, also, easily demonstrated by Reason; so easily, that no divine attribute has, perhaps, been so strongly realized, or generally acknowledged. So general is this acknowledgment, that a sober attempt to persuade a Christian audience of the truth of this doctrine, would be scarcely considered as serious, or as compatible with the dictates of good sense. An attempt to impress this doctrine on the mind is not, however, liable to the same objections, nor indeed to any objection. It cannot but be a profitable employment to examine, briefly, several things, in which we find the most striking displays of this perfection. To such an examination I shall, therefore, proceed; and observe,

I. *That the power of God is gloriously manifested in the work of Creation.*

Creation may be defined, the production of existence where nothing was before. The power, displayed in the act of creating, not only exceeds all finite comprehension, but is plainly so great, as to exclude every rational limitation. It is impossible to believe, that the power, which originally gives existence, cannot do any thing, and every thing, which in its own nature is capable of being done; or, in other words, every thing, the doing of which involves not a contradiction. When we contemplate creative power; we neither attempt, nor pretend, to form any estimate of its extent; but are lost in wonder and amazement at the character of him, who gives being wherever he pleases.

On the simple act of creating, however, it is not easy for such minds, as ours, to dwell. A single glance of the mind makes us possessed of all, which we know concerning this effort of Omnipotence, as it is in itself. But there are several things, relative to the effects which it produces, capable of mightily enhancing our ideas concerning this astonishing exertion of power. Of this nature is, in the

1st. place, *The vastness and multitude of the things which were created.*

The world, which we inhabit, is itself a vast and amazing work. The great divisions of Land and Water; the Continents and Oceans, into which it is distributed; nay, the Mountains and Plains, the Lakes and Rivers, with which it is magnificently adorned; are, severally, sufficiently wonderful and affecting to fill our minds, and to engross all the power of Contemplation. Nor are our thoughts less deeply interested by the vast multitude of plants, trees, and animals, with which every part of the Globe is stored at every period of time. All these, also, rise and fall in an uninterrupted succession. When one perishes, another immediately succeeds. No blank is permitted, and no vacuity found: but creating energy, always operating, produces a continual renovation of that which is lost.

When we lift up our eyes to the Heavens, we are still more amazed at the sight of many such worlds, composing the planetary system. The Comets, which surround our Sun, greatly increase our amazement by their numbers, the velocity of their motions, and the inconceivable extent of their circuits. It is still more enhanced by the union of these numerous worlds in one vast system, connected by a common centre, and revolving round that centre with a harmony, and splendour, worthy of a God.

But this system, great and wonderful as it is, is a mere speck, compared with the real extent of the Creation. Satisfactory evidence exists, that every star, which twinkles in the firmament, is no other than a Sun, a world of light, surrounded by its own attendant planets, formed into a system similar to ours. Forty-five thousand such stars have been counted, by the aid of the *Herschellian* Telescope, in so small a part of the Heavens, that, supposing this part to be sown no thicker than the rest, the same Telescope would reach at least seventy-five millions in the whole sphere. By means of new improvements in the same optical instrument, they have been found to be numerous to a degree still more astonishing. Every one of these is, in my view, rationally concluded to be the Sun, and Centre, of a system of planetary and cometary worlds. Beyond this, I think it not at all improbable, that, were we transported to the most distant of the visible stars, we should find there a firmament expanding over our heads, studded in the same manner with stars innumerable. Nay, were we to repeat the same flight, and be again wafted through the same distance, it is not improbable, that we should behold a new repetition of the same sublimity and glory. In this manner immensity appears, in a sense, to be peopled with worlds innumerable, constituting the boundless empire of Jehovah. How amazing, then, must be the power and greatness of Him, *who* not only *telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names*, but with a word spoke them all into being.

2dly. *The peculiar nature and splendour of many of these works strongly impress on our minds the greatness of creating power.*

Of this nature are all those vast works in the Heavens, which I have mentioned under the last head. To single out one of them; how glorious a work is the Sun! Of what astonishing dimensions! Of what wonderful attraction! Possessed of what supreme, unchangeable, and apparently immortal glory! Of what perpetual, and incomprehensible influence on the world, which we inhabit: not only causing it to move around its orbit with inconceivable rapidity, but producing, over its extensive surface, warmth and beauty, life and activity, comfort and joy, in all the millions of beings, by which it is inhabited!

Magnificent, however, as this object is, one mind is a more wonderful, more important, more illustrious display of creating power, than the whole inanimate universe. Suns with all their greatness and glory are still without life, without consciousness, without enjoyment; incapable, in themselves, of action, knowledge, virtue, or voluntary usefulness. A mind, on the contrary, is possessed of all these exalted powers, and is capable of possessing all these sublime attributes. A mind can know, love, and glorify, its Creator; can be instamped with his image, and adorned with his beauty and loveliness; and can appear desirable and delightful to his eye. It can *reflect, as a mirror, the glory of the Lord*, (for so ought the passage* to be translated) *and be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.* It can love, and bless, its fellow-minds; be loved, and blessed, by them; and become an useful and honourable instrument of advancing endlessly the universal good of the intelligent kingdom. In all these glorious attainments it can advance with an unceasing progress throughout Eternity. In this progress, it can rise to the heights, where angels now dwell; and, passing those heights, can ascend higher, and higher, till, in the distant ages of endless being, it shall look down on the most exalted created excellence, which now exists, as the mere dawnings of infantine intelligence. Worlds and Suns were created for the use of minds; but minds were created for the use of God.

3dly. *The same impressions are strongly made, when we regard God as the Author of life.*

The communication of life is a creative act, entirely, and illustriously, superior to the mere communication of existence. In the wonderful power, manifested in this communication, the glory of God, in the character of the Creator, is pre-eminently displayed. Accordingly *the living God, and the living Father;* that is, the God, who has life, originally, and independently, in himself, and is the source of it to all living beings; are titles, chosen to unfold especially the glory of the Divine nature. In the same manner, also, our Saviour challenges this wonderful attribute to himself, as a direct and unquestionable proof of his divinity. *As the Father,* saith he, *hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself. As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth; even*

* 2 Cor. iii. 18.

so the Son quickeneth whom he will. In the same manner, it is elsewhere said, *It is the Spirit, that quickeneth.*

The possession of life confers on every thing, which is the subject of it, a distinction, by which it is raised at once above all inanimate matter. Even *Vegetables*, of which life is predicated in a figurative sense only, derive from it a total superiority to all those beings, which are found in the mineral Kingdom. *Animal life*, which is life in its humblest degree, raises the being, in whom it exists, totally above all those things, which are not animated, by making them, at once, objects on which the emotions of the soul may be employed, and subjects of pleasure or pain, happiness or misery. Of these great distinctions, every one knows, no part of the mineral or vegetable world is susceptible.

Rational life is an attribute, of importance and distinction far higher still; and is the most wonderful display of the divine energy, which the Universe contains. Indeed, it is in a sense the end, for which all things else were created, and without which there is no probability, that they would ever have been. In exact accordance with the views, which I have expressed on this subject, we find a peculiar attention rendered to it by God, *in the creation of Man.* Other things had been called into being, antecedently to this event; and Man, as the most important of all terrestrial beings, and the end, for which they were made, was reserved to be the closing work. The World, his magnificent habitation, was finished, before the Tenant was formed, by whom it was to be occupied. Then God held a solemn consultation on this new and interesting work, and said, *Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness.* This consultation, holden by the Persons of the Godhead on the subject of communicating rational life, plainly and affectingly declares it to be a higher and more noble object of divine power, than all those which had preceded. From this pre-eminent importance it arises, that the termination of it, usually denominated *annihilation*, is in the view of the mind, invested with intense gloom, and the deepest horror; and that *immortality*, or the endless continuance of rational life, is an object always encircled with radiance, and regarded with exultation and rapture.

4thly. *The manner, in which the Scriptures exhibit the work of Creation as being performed, most forcibly impresses on our minds the greatness of Creating power.*

The greatness of power is discerned not only in the magnitude of the effects which it produces; but in the ease, also, with which they are produced. In this we are led rationally and indeed irresistibly, to discern, that the whole of the power possessed is not exerted; and that other and greater effects would, of course, spring from superior efforts, of which the same power is obviously capable. When *God created the Heavens and the Earth*, he said, *Let there be light: Let there be a Firmament: Let the waters be gathered into one place; and Let the dry land appear.* All these and other

similar commands were exactly, and instantaneously, obeyed. In a moment, Light invested the world; the firmament arched above it; the waters rolled backward into their bed; the dry land heaved; and the mountains lifted their heads towards Heaven. The World with all its furniture and inhabitants, the Heavens with all their magnificence, arose out of nothing, at a command. How superior to all finite comprehension must be the power of Him, *who spake*, and this stupendous work *was done*.

II. *The Omnipotence of God is divinely displayed in the Government of all things.*

The existence, and attributes, which God has given to all beings, He only can continue. He only holds together the innumerable atoms, which compose the innumerable material forms, found in the Universe; the plants and trees, the hills and mountains, the rivers and oceans. His power is the only bond, by which worlds are bound; or by which they are united in the planetary systems. This Union, this continuance of their being, is both an effect, and a proof, of the same energy, from which they were all originally derived. The same energy upholds all their attributes, and conducts all their operations.

These beings are endless in their multitude, immensely distant in times and places, wonderful, often, in their greatness and importance, and to finite minds innumerable in their diversities. All, also, are parts of one vast and perfect whole; to the perfection of which, each, in its appointed place and time, is indispensably necessary. What a power must that be, which, at one and the same moment, works in every vegetable and animal system in this great world; which upholds, quickens, and invigorates, every mind; which, at the same moment, also, acts in the same efficacious manner in every part of the solar system, and of all the other systems which compose the Universe! What must be the power of Him, who sends abroad, every moment, immense oceans of light from the Sun, and innumerable such oceans from the Stars; who *holds* all worlds in the *hollow of his hand*, retains them exactly in their places, and rolls them through the fields of Ether with unceasing, most rapid, and at the same time perfectly harmonious motions; and who, thus accomplishing every purpose for which they were made, prevents the least disturbance, error, or imperfection.

III. *The Omnipotence of God is strongly impressed on our minds by the consideration, that it is unaltered and undecaying.*

These mighty exertions have been already made through many thousand years: still they are perfectly made. They are made without intermission, rest, or relaxation. From century to century the energy operates night and day; and operates now with the same force and effect, as at the beginning. Every where it is seen; and is seen every where to be the same. It is, therefore, wholly unspent; and plainly incapable of being spent, or diminished.

In this wonderful fact is exhibited unanswerable proof of that

sublime declaration of the Prophet: *Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the Everlasting God,* JEHOVAH, *the Creator of the ends of the Earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?*

REMARKS.

From this doctrine we learn, in the

1st. place, *that God is absolutely independent.*

By the absolute independence of God I intend, that he needs, and can need, nothing to render his ability, either to do, or to enjoy, whatever he pleases, greater or more perfect; but that he possesses, in and of himself, all possible ability for both these purposes; so that his desires can never be opposed, nor his designs frustrated, either from want of knowledge to discern, or power to accomplish, whatever is desirable, or useful. The proof of this Independence is complete, in the account which has been given of the Omnipresence, Omniscience, and Omnipotence, of God. He, who contrived, who created, and who governs, all things, can contrive, create, and do, whatever involves not a contradiction. He must, therefore, have all good in his power, and possession; and can plainly need, and receive, nothing. Every created thing he made, and gave it just such attributes as he pleased. Every thing continues in existence for just such a time, and in just such a state, as he chooses; and operates in that manner only, which is prescribed, or permitted, by him. Nothing therefore can do, or be, what is, on the whole, contrary to his choice. Of course He cannot be disappointed of any purpose, unless we were to suppose him pleased to be disappointed; a self-contradiction too manifest to be admitted even by a child. According to this scheme he says of himself, *My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.** And again, *He doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?*

2dly. *By this perfection, God is eminently qualified for the government of all things.* From what has already been said of the manifestation of this divine attribute in the government of the universe, we cannot but perceive, that to this purpose the Omnipotence of God is indispensable. The same power, which formed this vast machine, is absolutely necessary to continue in their proper places the several parts; and to conduct the operations of the whole to the ends, which they are destined to accomplish. By this attribute only is God able to prevent all disorder and decay, and to frustrate all opposition. Many of the Intelligent creatures, which he has made, are possessed of such powers, as, if uncontrolled by him, might occasion important obstructions to the progress of many parts of his great kingdom, and a consequent frustration, or prevention, of many of his designs. The mischiefs and miseries,

* See Isaiah xlvi. 10, and Dan. iv. 35.

which, in the course of Eternity, might be introduced into the Universe, might easily exceed all finite estimation. But to every one of these beings He is able to say, and actually says, as he said, in ancient times, to the restless ocean, *Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further.*

In the same manner he is infinitely able, also, *to furnish all beings*, animated and inanimate, rational and irrational, *with that energy, by which they operate to the unceasing promotion of the infinite good, which he has begun to accomplish.* The Kingdom of God is a kingdom of means. With infinite wisdom and benignity he has chosen to adorn his Intelligent creatures with such faculties, as enable them to become subordinate agents in the great system, to coincide voluntarily with him in the furtherance of his perfect designs; and thus to sustain the character of moral excellence, and become lovely in his sight. Even the inanimate world, as a passive instrument in his hands, and theirs, of promoting the same designs, claims, in this manner, a species of inferior, but real, importance, and shows forth the praise of its divine Author. But all the powers and faculties, by which his creatures perform the respective parts allotted to them, are continued, as well as given, by his Omnipotence, which in this manner is every where glorified; and is every where the Rock, on which is founded the great building of the Universe.

As God, by his Omniscience and Omnipotence, is possessed of a complete sufficiency for the accomplishment of all his pleasure, and thus rendered absolutely Independent; it is evident, that he must be infinitely removed from all *fear*, on the one hand, and from all *favouriteism*, on the other. From the former of these considerations it is certain, that he cannot in any degree be deterred from the performance of any thing, which is right and good; and from the other, that he cannot possibly be allured to the production of any thing which is wrong, or injurious to his creatures. To him, who is raised above all actual and possible want, who can do what he pleases, and has, therefore, every thing in his possession, unchangeably and eternally, there can be no private, partial interest; no conceivable prejudice; no bias, no undue regard, towards any being. His views, and his conduct, alike, must be impartial; public; founded on the real state of things; and directed towards all beings according to their proper character and real desert. His creatures can plainly present no motive to Him to depart from that course of conduct, which in His view is wise and good. Here, then, in the character, and circumstances, of the Deity, an immoveable foundation is laid for universal, perfect, and glorious *Rectitude.*

From the Omnipotence of God, also, is derived that *awful character*, regarded by sinful beings with supreme dread, and by virtuous ones with supreme reverence. Intelligent beings are governed only by motives. In this attribute, especially as inseparably

connected with Omniscience, all such beings find most solemn and cogent motives to *fear that glorious and fearful name*, JEHOVAH *their* GOD; to be terrified at the thought of sinning against him; to tremble at the effects of his anger; and to abstain from rebellion against his government. Here the Righteous find the strongest motives to resist temptation; and the wicked, to return to their duty. A powerless God, however lovely and excellent, could neither defend his own honour, nor protect his creatures, however dutiful, from injustice and ruin. To a Ruler of free agents, therefore, Power is indispensable for the support of his own dignity, and the safety and peace of his subjects. To the Ruler of all free agents, Omnipotence is indispensable for the perfect establishment of his infinite glory, and the obedience and consequent happiness of his immense and eternal Kingdom.

3dly. *How terrible an enemy to obstinate and impenitent sinners is an Omnipotent God!*

I love them that love me, and will cause them that love me to inherit substance; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and reward them that hate me; is language, completely descriptive of the designs and dispensations of JEHOVAH, towards his rational creatures. This is the only exhibition of the divine government in the Scriptures: it is the only view, which can be satisfactorily formed of that government by Reason. No man can, for a moment, seriously believe, that God can love, and reward, those who hate him; or hate, and punish, those who love him. Such conduct would be wholly inconsistent with the nature of an intelligent being; and cannot, therefore, be attributed to the Author of all intelligence.

Let me now bring this subject home to the heart of every member of this audience. Let me ask, and let each individual solemnly answer in his own mind, "Do you love God? Do you desire to please him? Do you cheerfully obey his commandments? Do you humbly and faithfully walk in his ordinances? Or do you, with the wicked of old, and of all succeeding ages, *say unto God, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways? What is the Almighty, that we should serve him; and what profit should we have if we pray unto him?*

Call to mind, I beseech you, how many denunciations of future vengeance against impenitent sinners are uttered in his Word. Remember, that all these were uttered by Him, with a perfect knowledge of the guilt of sin, and of the extent of the punishment which it demands; with a perfect conviction of the rectitude of his own designs, and with an immoveable purpose to carry them into execution. How certain is it, then, that they will be exactly executed; and that the impious and the profligate, impenitent and the unbelieving, will drink the dregs of divine indignation! Consider in how many forms of alarm these threatenings are delivered; what woes they contain; and what, that is terrible, they do not contain! With these affecting things in view, remember that He, who

has denounced these woes, He, who will execute these denunciations, is the Almighty God. How fearfully able is such a God to inflict every punishment, and to execute every threatening! What amazing sources of suffering are within the limits of his Omniscience and Omnipotence! How easily can he make every pore, faculty, and thought, the channel, and the seat, of inexpressible anguish!

Think, I beseech you, how utterly unable all other beings are to deliver out of his hand. Who on Earth, or in Heaven, *has an arm like God, or can thunder with a voice like Him?* His hand can reach, as His eye can pierce, "beyond all limit." No caverns, no solitudes, no depths of the earth or the ocean, can hide from Him the miserable objects of his wrath. *Should they ascend up into Heaven; He is there. Should they make their bed in hell;* behold, he is there. *Should they take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there would his hand lead them, and his right hand would hold them. Should they say, Surely the darkness will cover us: even the night would be light about them.*

Let these most affecting things sink deep into your hearts. Remember, that you were made, and are preserved in life, health, and comfort, in probation and hope, by the Almighty power of God; and that on him you depend for every blessing present and future, for safety from every evil, and for final deliverance from every danger. On his pleasure alone is your being suspended, and your welfare. Of what importance, then, is it to every one of you, that he should love you, and be pleased with you; and, of course, that you should love Him, and faithfully labour to please him? Have you ever brought this subject home to your hearts, and pondered it with that solemnity, which its importance requires? Has the amazing interest, which you have in obtaining the favour of God, been realized by you? Is it now a part of your plans for future life, to begin the great work of attaining his approbation at some approaching period? Is this period fixed and known? Are the terms on which this immense possession may be gained, considered and adopted, by you? Have you remembered, that Christ *is the* only *true and living way* to acceptance, with God; and through faith in his blood, alone, is found the justification of life? Have you remembered that he has said, *To-day, if ye will hear my voice, harden not your hearts?*

Are you, on the other hand, prepared to encounter the exertions of that power, which formed the earth and the heavens, when employed to inflict on you the terrible evils, threatened to all those who displease him? Have you devised, or can you devise, any means of escape, or safety, in the day of visitation; any means, to which you dare trust your souls, and with which you dare launch into eternity? He has told you of one way, in which safety may certainly be found, and which leads directly to Heaven. Do you

know any other, which terminates in that happy place, and will conduct you to everlasting joy?

4thly. *How useful a Friend must such a God be to the Righteous.* That God is a faithful and steadfast friend to the righteous, cannot be questioned; because they love, and labour, to please him, and must therefore be loved of him; and because they are the friends and followers of his Son. Accordingly, he has disclosed in his Word designs of mercy and goodness to them, so great, as almost to transcend belief, and to leave the mind rather lost in astonishment than filled with expectation. He, who regards his own character with the candour, and humility, of the Gospel; who considers how greatly and how often he has sinned, how guilty his life must appear before God, and how utterly *unworthy* he is *of the least of all his mercies;* cannot but exclaim, when he casts his eye over the promises of the Gospel, *Who am I, O Lord God, that thou hast brought me hitherto? For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou spoken all these great things to make thy servant know them. Let thy name be magnified for ever:* for *now, O Lord God, thou art God; and thy words be true; and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant; and with thy blessing let me be blessed for ever.**

In the Covenant of grace there are contained treasures of good, to which no limit can be assigned. On this subject the Apostle *Paul*, in comments of unrivalled sublimity, has expressed the most accurate, as well as the most exalted and astonishing, sentiments, which can be found even in the Scriptures. *All things*, saith he to Christians, *are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours.* And again, *I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* And again, *We know, that all things do† labour together for good to them that love God.* From these declarations we learn, that all things are the property, and the destined possession, of the righteous; that no being, or event, shall preclude them from the enjoyment of this mighty inheritance; but that, on the contrary, every being and every event is employed, with one vast and united effort, to place this boundless good in their hands. Whatever, therefore, is really needed by them; whatever is really good for them, in the present life; whatever can render their future immortality blessed and glorious, God has covenanted to bestow on them through the mediation of Christ.

When he, who can truly *say to Corruption, "Thou art my father," and to the Worm, "Thou art my mother, and my sister,"* turns his eye to these wonderful promises, and to the immense assemblage

* 2 Samuel vii. † συνεργει.

of blessings, which they convey; he is naturally lost in amazement, and prepared to believe them, only in a loose and general manner. Scarcely can he persuade himself, that they are not the language of bold and sublime exaggerations, of ardent and daring hyperbole, rather than sober communications of simple truth. Were the rewards promised, the result of his own obedience; well might he doubt. But, when he remembers, that God *has not spared his own Son, but delivered him up for us all*, he cannot, if he would act rationally, fail to unite with the Apostle in exclaiming, *How shall he not with him, also, freely give us all things?* The benevolence, necessary to the origination, and the communication of these blessings, is in this event proved beyond a question.

In the Omniscience of God we are presented with ample ability to contrive, and in his Omnipotence with ample ability to accomplish, every part of this amazing sum of good. To Him, who willed the Universe into being, it is equally easy to create great enjoyments, as little; many, as few; endless, as momentary. The vast system of Good, which he has promised, he can call into existence in a moment, with the same ease, with which he can create an insect or an atom. Whatever he gives, his store cannot be lessened: nor can a preceding communication of good be, with Him, a reason for refusing, or neglecting, to communicate again. Immeasurably bountiful, he can never be weary of giving: immeasurably powerful, he can never be weary of providing.

From the Omnipotence of God every righteous man may, then, confidently expect a final deliverance from all his enemies, sorrows, and sins; from death, and the grave; from future pollution, and eternal wo. He may be certainly assured, that the same glorious and everlasting Friend will communicate to him, and to his fellow-christians, immortal life; will enlarge their minds with increasing knowledge; will improve them with ever-growing virtue; and will supply them with endlessly advancing happiness.

5thly. *How great and glorious does God appear, as invested with Almighty power!*

Great is the Lord, says the Psalmist, *and greatly to be praised. One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts. All thy works praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom*, and talk of *thy power. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations. Canst thou*, says *Zophar, by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the Sea. Who hath measured the waters*, says *Isaiah, in the hollow of his hand; and meted out heaven with the span; and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure; and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?*

The Being, who made, upholds, and governs, the Universe, discloses in these acts his own proper character; a character infinitely greater and more glorious than the highest creature can sustain, or comprehend. *All beings are before him as nothing, and justly accounted unto him less than nothing, and vanity.*

We were not, indeed, present at the birth of this wonderful Work. We did not behold the boundless midnight enlightened with suns, or the desolate wilds of immensity filled with worlds and their inhabitants. We did not hear *the morning Stars sing together, and the Sons of God shout for joy.* But in the history of the Creation, dictated by the voice of God, we are presented with such sublime views of this amazing subject, as stretch our imaginations to the utmost, and fill our understanding with astonishing ideas. In the same work, as it is daily seen by our eyes, we discern wonders surpassing number and measure, and gloriously illustrating the Power by which all are accomplished. In the history of past events, also; in the Deluge; the Destruction of *Sodom;* the Wonders of *Egypt*, of *Sinai*, and of *Canaan;* in the miracles of the Prophets of Christ, and of the Apostles; are such manifestations of Almighty power, as cannot fail to astonish every mind, and fill every heart with the most awful apprehensions of its Maker.

In the daily providence of God, we are also witnesses of the amazing effects of his Omnipotence. In the rising and setting of the sun, and the revolutions of the heavens, we behold a hand, whose exertions disclaim all limit. We hear him, also, *thundering marvellously with his voice;* we see him *sending forth lightnings with rain*, making the earth to tremble, and the mountains to fall, pouring out rivers of fire from the volcano, and whelming cities and countries in a general conflagration.

On the other hand, what pleasing and glorious proofs of the same power are exhibited in its softer and gentler, its less awful, but not less solemn exertions through the circuit of the seasons: in the spring, particularly; when God appears *as the light of the morning when the sun ariseth, even of a morning without clouds; and as the clear shining of the sun after rain upon the tender herb of the field.* Then, with a hand eminently attractive and wonderful, he diffuses life, and warmth, and beauty, and glory, over the face of the world; and from the death of winter, bids all things awake with a general and delightful resurrection. The successive seasons are replete with successive wonders, wrought by the same almighty hand. *Day unto day, indeed, uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge*, concerning this great subject. He who does not mark these astonishing disclosures, made in heaven and in earth, in ten thousand and ten million forms, must be a brute; and he, who, surveying them, does not regard God as infinitely *wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working*, has indeed *eyes, but he sees not; ears, but he cannot hear; and a heart, but he cannot understand.* Every good man, on the contrary, must admire and

adore Him, *who doeth all these things;* must rejoice with humble gratitude, and divine joy, in all the stupendous displays of his goodness; must tremble at the *terrible things*, which he doeth *in righteousness, when his judgments are abroad in the earth;* and must, on every occasion, be ready to exclaim: *Who is like unto thee, O Lord: glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?*

SERMON VIII.

BENEVOLENCE OF GOD PROVED FROM THE WORKS OF CREATION AND PROVIDENCE.

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1 JOHN iv. 8.—*For God is love.*

HAVING considered *the existence, and the natural attributes, of God, at some length;* I shall now proceed to the next subject of theological inquiry; viz. *his moral attributes.* In the order, best suited to the method of discussion, which I have preferred, that, which first offers itself for examination, is *his Benevolence.*

This perfection is ascribed to God in the text, in a singular manner. It is not asserted, *that God is benevolent*, but *that he is Benevolence;* or that *Benevolence is the essence, the sum, of his being and character.* The force, and beauty, of this assertion, will be felt by every one, who attends to it, without any remarks from me.

That Αγαπη signifies the kind of Love, which in English is called Benevolence, will not, I presume, be questioned. If any one is at a loss concerning this fact; he may be satisfied by reading *St. Paul's* extensive definition of this word, contained in the 13th chapter of the first Epistle to the *Corinthians.*

In canvassing this important subject, I propose to inquire in what manner it is exhibited to us, in the

I. place, *by Reason;* and

II. *by Revelation.*

I. *I propose to inquire in what manner it is exhibited to us by Reason.*

In examining this part of the subject I shall

1st. *Allege several arguments, furnished by Reason, in proof of the Benevolence of God;* and

2dly. *Answer the principal Objections to this Doctrine.*

The importance of the question, *Whether God is a Benevolent Being*, is no less than infinite. Every thing, therefore, which seriously affects it, must be of high moment to every Intelligent creature. The decisions of Reason on this subject, undoubtedly affect the question in a serious manner; and are of course very interesting to us. Although I can by no means admit, with many of my fellow-men, respectable for their understanding and worth, that the Benevolence of God is not capable of being completely proved, or that it is not in fact completely proved, by the Scriptures, independently of all other sources of argument; yet I cannot help believing, that, if the proof furnished by Reason be satisfactory also, and can be fairly exhibited as satisfactory, the minds of many men,

at least, will rest on this subject with a conviction more unmingled, a confidence less exposed to danger and disturbance. To compass this object, if it can be compassed, will, then, be very desirable.

It is hardly necessary for me to observe, that the question, concerning the amount of the evidence, which Reason gives concerning this doctrine, has long been, and is still, disputed. It is well known to many of this audience, that Divines and other Christians, as well as other men, differ in their opinions about it; and that the proofs of the divine benevolence from Reason are regarded by many persons of reputation as insufficient. I have myself entertained, heretofore, opinions on this subject, different from those, which I now entertain. As I have not seen it discussed in such a manner, as satisfied my own wishes; I shall now consider it with more particularity, than might otherwise be necessary.

The *Self-existence*, *Eternity*, *Immutability*, *Omnipresence*, *Omniscience*, and *Omnipotence*, of God have, I flatter myself, been clearly proved by arguments, derived from Reason. From these attributes it has, I trust, been unanswerably evinced, that *God is absolutely independent;* that all things, which can be done, or enjoyed, are in his power and possession; and that he can neither need, nor receive any thing. From these considerations it is evident in the

1st. place, *That God can have no possible motive to be malevolent.*

It will not be pretended, that *the nature of things* can furnish any such motive. That *to be malevolent* is a more desirable character or state of being, than *to be benevolent*, cannot be asserted, nor believed. Nor can any motive to this character be presented to God *from without himself, or from other beings.* As all other beings, together with every thing pertaining to them, are, and cannot but be, just what he pleases; it is certain, that he can gain nothing to himself by the exercise of malevolence. *Finite beings* may discern good in the hands of others, which they may covet, and at the same time be hindered from possessing, unless by the indulgence of fraud, injustice, or unkindness; or by attacking, and injuring, such, as prevent from gaining the beloved object. Those who possess it, they may envy, or hate. Those, who hinder them from gaining it, they may regard with resentment or anger; and, under the influence of these malignant passions, may be induced to disturb their rights, and invade their happiness. But it is plain, that these considerations can have no more application to *God*, than the circumstances, which give them birth. All good is actually in his possession: there is, therefore, nothing left for him to desire. All beings and events are exactly such, as he chooses either to produce, or to permit; and such as he chose, antecedently to their existence. He can, therefore, have nothing to fear, or to malign. As he gave all, which is possessed by other beings; he can evidently neither gain, nor receive any thing. If he be malevolent, then, he must sustain this character without a motive.

2dly. *An Omniscient Being cannot but see, that it is more glorious to himself, and more beneficial to his creatures, to sustain, and to exhibit, a benevolent character, than its contrary: or, in other words, in every respect more desirable.*

The glory of the Creator and the good of his creatures involve every thing, that is desirable. That this character, in its existence and exercise, is on both these accounts more desirable than its contrary, cannot be questioned. We, narrow as our faculties are, perfectly know this truth. It is, therefore, *absolutely* desirable. That this truth must be seen by an Omniscient Being, in a manner infinitely superior to that, in which we see it, hardly needs to be asserted.

The desirableness of this conduct, arising from the glory of the Creator and the good of his creatures, seems to present, when we consider it as extending through Eternity, an *infinite motive* to the Creator, to cherish a benevolent character, and to manifest it in all his conduct. To the power of this motive there is at the same time, no motive opposed. On the contrary, we know, and the Creator, in a manner infinitely more perfect, knows, that the existence and exercise of a malevolent character would be infinitely dishonourable to himself, and in the progress of Eternity infinitely injurious to his creatures. Each of these considerations presents to the Creator an infinite motive to exercise Benevolence on the one hand, and not to exercise malevolence on the other. If, then, he has in fact exercised malevolence; he has done it without any motive, and against the influence of both these: each of them of infinite importance.

Thus it is I think clearly certain, that God cannot be induced to exercise a malevolent spirit, because malevolence is in itself a desirable character; nor because the nature of things offers any enjoyment, which, upon the whole, is good, to the indulgence of this disposition; nor because He does not perfectly know these truths. If he is malevolent, then, he is so from an original, inherent propensity in his own nature; a propensity, uninfluenced by truth, and immoveable by motives.

How far such a character can be rationally supposed to be possible in a being, who has all things in his power, it is difficult to determine. The observations, already made, clearly prove, that such a being must discern with absolute certainty the infinite disadvantage of indulging this spirit. The difference between rejoicing in all his works, as means of glory to himself, with a consciousness, that he has formed and conducted them to this exalted end, and feeling the gloomy, dreadful pain of boundless malice, is in itself obviously boundless. If, then, God has not chosen this enjoyment, he has failed to choose it, with a clear discernment, that it was in his power, and under the influence of a disposition, which would not yield to conviction, nor to motives, infinite in their magnitude. That he has not exercised this disposition I shall now proceed to show; and for this purpose observe,

3dly. *The only conduct, which a Creator can receive with pleasure from his creatures, must plainly be attachment, reverence, and the voluntary obedience which they produce.*

Whether the Creator be benevolent, or malevolent; it is impossible, that he should not choose to be loved, reverenced, and obeyed. But the real Creator has so formed his works, and so constituted his Providence, that the minds of men, irresistibly, and of absolute necessity, esteem a benevolent being more than one of the opposite character. I do not mean, here, that this is the dictate of the heart; but I mean, that it is the unavoidable dictate of the intellect; of the conscience and understanding. The intellect is so formed by the Creator, that it is impossible for it to think otherwise. Any person, who will make the attempt, will find it beyond his power to approve of malevolence at all. If, therefore, the Creator be malevolent, he has so formed his Intelligent creatures in this world, that they cannot possibly esteem his character. In other words, he has made them incapable, by a natural necessity, of rendering to him that regard, which in itself, or in its consequences, is the only possible conduct, on the part of his Intelligent creatures, which a Creator can have proposed, when he gave them existence.

Should it be objected, *that Benevolence is estimable in the nature of things; that to see its nature is the same thing as to esteem it; and that, therefore, Intelligent creatures cannot avoid experiencing this esteem:* I answer, Should it be granted, as I think it must, that all this is true, still an Omnipotent Creator might, for ought that appears, have formed Intelligent creatures with such optics, with powers of understanding so directed, that they might have seen his character in an estimable light. Hypochondriacal and insane minds are direct proofs, that minds can exist, with directly opposite views to those, which Intelligent creatures in this world usually experience. Nor is there any evidence, that an Omnipotent being could not so form Intelligent creatures, as to vary their modes of perception in any manner, and to any extent, which pleased him. At the same time it is perfectly obvious, that, as we are wholly passive in receiving ideas and impressions, he might, with entire ease, have given us just such ideas as he pleased, by presenting to us only those objects, from which they would be derived. In this manner he might have prevented us from forming any conceptions of his moral character; and led us only to admire his Omniscience and Omnipotence, in the stupendous works, which they are capable of producing. This, it is believed, involves no contradiction; and every thing, which does not involve a contradiction, such a Being can confessedly perform.

Should the scheme, which I have here suggested, not be admitted; I answer again: There was no necessity, that he should create Intelligent beings at all; and there is no conceivable motive, which could induce an infinite Being to form Intelligent creatures.

who, from their nature and their circumstances, could not possibly esteem, but from absolute necessity must disesteem, him.

But this is not all. Men are so formed, as irresistibly to hate and despise Malevolence. This conduct, on their part, is the unvarying dictate of mere intellect, as well as of the heart. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary: the unavoidable result of that state of things, which he himself has formed; is his own immediate work; and, so far as we know, the only work, of an Intelligent nature, which he has produced: being found in all men, and therefore justly presumable of all other Intelligent creatures. It is, hence, unavoidably concluded to be a direct, and genuine, expression of his choice. If, then, we suppose the Creator to be a malevolent being; he has thus necessitated, beyond a possibility of its being otherwise, his Intelligent creatures to hate and despise that, which he supremely loves and approves; viz. his own moral character; and to esteem and love that, which he supremely hates and despises; viz. the moral character, which is directly opposed to his own. This he has further necessitated them to do, with the entire, and irresistible, approbation of their own understanding and conscience; and, therefore, without any possibility of a future conviction, on their part, that this conduct is wrong in them, or that they are, on this account, guilty, blameworthy, and justly punishable. On the contrary, they are furnished with complete conviction, that this conduct is right, praiseworthy, and rewardable; a conviction, which can never be removed, nor weakened; and which will attend them through every period of their future being. Thus he has, in the most perfect manner, and, at the same time, in the manner most perfectly unaccountable, formed Intelligent beings so, as effectually to prevent the only end, which he could propose in their creation, from ever being accomplished.

4thly. *The Creator has placed mankind either in a state of trial, or a state of reward: but our present state is, on neither of these suppositions, compatible with the doctrine, that He is malevolent.*

I say, that mankind are placed either in a state of trial, or a state of reward; because rational creatures can exist in no possible situation, except one of these two. If, then, we are placed in *a state of reward;* we are beyond measure more happy, and less miserable, than is consistent with the character of malevolence in the Creator. No man can say, or believe, that the present state of the human race is so unhappy, as to satisfy the desires or accomplish the purposes, of infinite malevolence.

If we are in a *state of trial;* our circumstances are equally inconsistent with the designs of a malevolent disposer. All our opposition to his character and designs is necessarily and perfectly approved by our own consciences; and all our approbation and love towards the opposite characteristics is equally approved by the same umpire. In the mean time, our approbation, or adoption, of malevolence, or our disesteem, and rejection, of benevolence, is

in the same necessary and perfect manner condemned by our consciences. But these are the only kinds of conduct, in which we can possibly be guilty of revolt, or disobedience, to a malevolent Creator. For these only can we, then, be tried and condemned by him. Should we, accordingly, be condemned and punished, we shall still necessarily, certainly, and for ever discern, beyond a doubt, that in all that, for which we are punished, we acted with entire rectitude. Of course, whatever punishment we receive, we shall still be supported by the entire approbation of our own minds; and shall, therefore, be far removed from that finished misery, which could not fail to be destined by infinite malevolence for the punishment of its enemies. We should know, that our conduct was right, and excellent; should dwell upon it with entire satisfaction, and should feel no small support, no contemptible alleviation of our sufferings, in the conviction, that our punishment was unmerited, and unjust; and that the evil, for which we suffered, existed, not in ourselves, but in our iniquitous sovereign.

If it can be supposed, that such a Being could confer rewards on any of his creatures; it is evident, that he must confer them on such, as resembled him in their disposition, and approved of his moral character; and for this very resemblance and approbation. But it is perfectly easy to perceive, that the happiness, which would constitute their reward, must be embittered by a complete conviction, that the conduct, for which they are rewarded, was in itself wrong, vile, and despicable; that they themselves were vile and despicable in loving and practising it; that their happiness is wholly unmerited; and that those, who are punished by the same being, are far more excellent than themselves, and in truth are the only excellent beings. Of course, their happiness must be deeply embittered by a miserable sense of unworthiness; by a perpetual self-condemnation. Such must be the manner, in which this supposition exhibits the conduct of the Creator towards his enemies, on the one hand, and towards his friends, on the other.

All these considerations are enhanced, by the great fact, *that God has so constituted the world, as to make misery the only legitimate and natural consequence of malevolence, and happiness the only natural consequence of benevolence.* In this manner has he irresistibly impressed these truths on the minds of men; exhibited them as practical certainties, visible in all their practical concerns; and thus fixed them beyond removal in the minds of his Rational creatures. When we remember, that these things were contrived, and chosen, by an Omniscient being, who, of course, discerned their real nature and import, before he chose them; we cannot but discern, that they grow necessarily out of the character of a benevolent Creator, but are utterly inconsistent with the opposite character.

5thly. *The goodness of God, displayed in the present world, is a strong argument, that he is a benevolent Being.*

St. Paul observes, that God *left not himself without witness* to the Heathens, *in that he did good, and gave them rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness.** In this passage God himself declares, that his goodness to mankind, in the several particulars here recited, is a witness to them of his true character. What the Scriptures here declare, the Reason of man has in every age approved. All nations have supposed God to be a good Being; and, whenever they have employed themselves in accounting for the origin of evil by attributing it to the agency of superior beings, they have, in no case within my recollection, attributed it to the Original, or Supreme, God. Him they have uniformly believed to be a good, or benevolent, Being.

When we examine the works of Creation and Providence, we are liable, in pursuing this argument, to a considerable degree of perplexity, arising from the vast multitude, and perpetual complication of the things to be examined. To prevent this perplexity, into which men fall very easily, I know of no better method, than *to lay hold of certain prominent and distinguishing features of these works, from which we may derive correct general apprehensions of their nature, without confounding ourselves by dwelling on particulars. This*, after premising, that in every part of such an examination we must carefully separate what is done by men, from what is done by God, I shall attempt to accomplish under the following heads.

1st. *God makes mankind the subjects of extensive enjoyment in the present world.*

Our health, food, and raiment, are means of enjoyment to us daily, throughout our lives. Our friends and connexions, also, continually, and extensively, contribute to our happiness. The pleasantness of seasons; the beauty and grandeur of the earth and the heavens; the various kinds of agreeable sounds, ever fluctuating on our ears; the immensely various and delightful uses of language; the interchanges of thought and affection; the peace and safety, afforded by the institution of government; the power and agreeableness of motion and activity; the benefit and comfort, afforded by the arts and sciences, particularly by those of writing, printing, and numbering; and the continual gratification, found in employment; are all, in a sense, daily and hourly sources of good to man; all furnished, either directly or indirectly, by the hand of God. If we consider these things with any attention, we shall perceive, that some of them are unceasing; and that others of them are so frequently repeated, as almost to deserve the same appellation. We shall also perceive, that they are blessings of high importance to our well-being; and that, notwithstanding this character, they are apt to be forgotten in the list, which we form of our blessings, and to be numbered among those, which we call *things of course.*

* Acts xiv. 17

It ought to be remembered, that in this manner we are prone to diminish both the number and the greatness of our blessings, and the goodness of God in bestowing them; and that we are thus apt to regard them with a very erroneous estimation. But if we consider the number, and the importance, of these and the like blessings; the frequent recurrence of some of them, and the uninterrupted continuance of others; we cannot fail, if influenced by a just and candid spirit, to unite with the Psalmist in his earnest wish, *that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men.*

2dly. *God has furnished mankind with many alleviations, and many remedies, for the evils, which they suffer in the present world.*

Of this nature are the innumerable medicines, which he has provided for the relief, or the cure, of our diseases; fire, for our deliverance from the evils of cold; shade, from those of heat; rest, from those of labour; sleep, from those of watching; together with innumerable others, which cannot here be mentioned. I feel myself obliged, however, to take notice of the attention, which God has given to the preservation of life, of health, and of safety, in the warnings, which our senses give us of the approach, or the existence, of injuries, in an innumerable variety of ways; and in the various instinctive efforts, by which we are, in a sense involuntarily, either guarded, or relieved. Thus, on the one hand, pain warns us of almost all injuries, to which our bodies are exposed, or by which they have begun to be affected. On the other, the eye, by its power of contracting the pupil, instinctively exercised, defends itself from the blindness, which would otherwise necessarily ensue from the admission of too great a quantity of light. The hands also, and other members, are instinctively employed to defend us from evils, in many cases, where contrivance would come too late for our safety. To mention one more example; fear, the most active and sudden of all our passions, is a continual preservative against innumerable evils, by which we are threatened. Nor ought I here by any means to omit the self-restoring power of our bodies, so remarkable in recovering us from sickness, in the healing of wounds, and in the renewal of our decayed faculties. These, and innumerable other things, of a nature generally similar, are certainly strong proofs of the goodness of God to mankind.

3dly. *The original and main design of each particular thing appears plainly to be benevolent.*

This is an argument of *Dr. Paley* on the subject of the present discourse; and is certainly a sound one. The eye is made to furnish us with the benefit of seeing; the ear, of hearing; and the palate, of tasting. The organs of speech are manifestly intended for the purpose of articulation; the hands and the feet for their well known important uses. The evils, to which these several things are subject, are in the mean time incidental, and not parts

of the main design. No anatomist, he observes, ever discovered a system of organization, calculated to produce pain and disease. But the character, the disposition of the Contriver is, undoubtedly, chiefly seen in the main design of the contrivance; and this is justly observed to be universally benevolent. In the state and circumstances of Infants, where this contrivance is complicated with few appendages, we see, usually, the most pure, unmingled enjoyment; although even here it is not a little alloyed by many mixtures, derived from the agency of man.

4thly. *All the blessings, experienced by mankind, are bestowed on sinful beings.*

The subject of moral evil will be further examined under the head of objections against this doctrine. At the present time I am only concerned with the fact, *that it exists in the human race.* On these guilty beings, then, the blessings of this world are bestowed. It will not be denied, that the communication of good to an evil, ungrateful creature, is a far higher manifestation of goodness, than the communication of the same good to a virtuous and grateful one. As, therefore, all the blessings, found in the present world, are in every instance given to creatures of this evil character; the goodness of God in giving them is enhanced beyond our comprehension. An impartial and contemplative mind, when observing the conduct, and marking the character, of the human race, cannot but be struck at the sight of such extensive beneficence, communicated unceasingly, for so many ages, to beings of such a character. The patience and forbearance of God, particularly, towards such a world as this, are an illustrious proof of his benevolence. Mankind rebel against his government; accuse him of weakness, injustice, and cruelty; murmur against his dispensations; profane and blaspheme his name; refuse to him the only regard, which they can render him, namely, reverence, love, and obedience; and pay this regard to men and beasts, reptiles and stocks. In the mean time they deceive, defraud, pollute, hate, oppress, and murder, each other; and make it a great part of their whole employment to carry violence, death, and devastation, through the world. All these have also been their employment, and their character, ever since the apostacy: a character, perfectly understood and comprehended by God. Still he has patiently waited on them six thousand years; has forborne to execute the vengeance, which this evil conduct has universally merited; has returned day and night, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, to this polluted world; and has given its inhabitants unceasingly, *rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness.* Can our minds conceive of a character, at once wise and just, and at the same time fraught with higher benevolence?

II. *I shall now attempt to answer the Objections, usually made to this doctrine.*

These are all reducible to two:

1st. *The existence of Moral evil;* and

2dly. *The existence of Natural evil.*

On the existence of Moral evil I observe in the

1st. place, *that God cannot be proved to be the efficient cause of sin.*

It is, I think, dictated by Reason, as well as Revelation, that, *no man* may *say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*

It will not be disputed, that we ought not to admit the doctrine, that God is the efficient cause of sin, until it is proved. Until this is done, therefore, Man is unquestionably to be acknowledged as the cause of his own sin.

2dly. *It cannot be proved, that God was obliged, either by justice or benevolence, to prevent sin from existing.*

A state of trial supposes a liability to sin; and it cannot be proved, that it is inconsistent with justice, or benevolence, for God to place his rational creatures in a state of trial. The benevolence of God, in this case, is to be estimated by a clear and complete comprehension of all the ends, which he has in view, and of the nature, fitness, or unfitness, of all the means to those ends. But of such a comprehension we are not possessed; and therefore are certainly unable to discern, that it is inconsistent with perfect benevolence to place us in such a state. If we are to be *rewarded;* it would seem necessary, as well as proper, that we should be *tried;* because our own conduct is the only thing, for which *we* can be rewarded. That benevolence may propose such a trial, in order to such a reward, appears to be the natural and universal dictate of Reason.

All that Justice seems to require, in this case, is, that more and higher motives to obedience, than to disobedience, should be presented to the mind of the probationer. This in the present case is certainly, and invariably, the fact.

3dly. *It cannot be proved, that the existence of sin will, in the end, be a detriment to the Universe.*

Until we know what will be both the progress and the end, we certainly can never prove this proposition; because the means of proof lie beyond our reach. All moral beings are governed by motives only. What motives will, upon the whole, produce the greatest good, united with the least evil to the Intelligent kingdom; and how far the fall and punishment of some moral beings may, in the nature of the case, be indispensably necessary to the persevering obedience of the great body, cannot be determined by *us.* But, until this is done, and indeed many other things of great moment to the question, it can never be proved, that the existence of moral evil is injurious to the Universe; or the permission of it, inconsistent with the most perfect good-will on the part of God.

At the same time, I acknowledge myself utterly unable, and my complete conviction, that all other men are unable, to explain this subject so, as to give to an inquirer clear and satisfactory views, by the light of Reason, of the propriety of permitting the introduction of moral evil into the Intelligent system.

The only object, which I have in view, or which is necessary to my present purpose, is to show, what I persuade myself I have shown, that no proof can be drawn from this source against this attribute in the Creator.

2dly. *The existence of Natural evil is also objected against the benevolence of God.*

On this subject I observe in the

1st. place, *that in considering this objection we are bound to separate carefully the evils, which are caused by God, from those, which are produced by men.* Were this separation accurately made, we should all be astonished to see how small would be the number of evils, of which God is the proper author. Were we to consider attentively the multitude of sufferings, brought upon mankind by the evil disposition of themselves, and their fellow-men, either mediately or immediately, the mass would rise so much higher than our expectations, as to disappoint every preconception, which we had formed on this subject. Even in those cases, in which we acknowledge the infliction to be derived from our Maker, we should be astonished to see how great a proportion of our sufferings is produced by ourselves, or by our fellow-creatures. We suffer greatly from *poverty*. How large a part of human poverty is created by sloth, profusion, intemperance, rashness, fraud, falsehood, contention, oppression, and war! We suffer greatly from *disease*. What a vast proportion of the diseases in this world owe their origin to indolence, imprudence, intemperance, passion, and other causes merely human! The same observations are applicable to many other things, of the same general nature. In truth, men in almost all cases either originate, or increase, the evils, suffered in the present life.

2dly. *The evils inflicted by God are always less, than the subjects of them merit by their sins.*

A strictly just being is *a benevolent being*. Certainly then, he who inflicts less, than justice will warrant, or than the criminal deserves, is benevolent. If the general position, therefore, be true, it is perfectly evident, that the very evils, which are here alleged as proofs, that God is not benevolent, are unanswerable proofs, that he is. But no sober man will for a moment pretend, that the evils, which himself suffers, are greater than he deserves. Every such man will acknowledge readily, that he suffers much less than he merits. Of course, the aggregate of human sufferings is less than is merited by the aggregate of human guilt.

It will perhaps be here replied, that *these sufferings fall as heavily upon the best men, as upon the worst; and that they experience*

greater evils than they have deserved. If this should indeed be said, and believed; it can only spring from gross inattention to the subject, and gross ignorance of the demerit of sin: an inattention and ignorance, it must be acknowledged, most unhappily common among men. The doubt, if it exist, may be easily removed. Go to as many such men, as you please; and every one of them will inform you, that his own sufferings are much less than he is conscious of having deserved. In truth, good men never call this fact in question; but find themselves sufficiently employed in lamenting, on the one hand, their own guilt; and in thankfully admiring, on the other, the forbearance of God.

But it will be further said, *that Infants, also, are subjected to sufferings; and that, beyond any desert, which can be imputed to them.* The situation of infants, and the dispensations of Providence towards them, I acknowledge to be, in many respects, mysterious, to a degree, beyond my ability satisfactorily to explain. But I utterly question the ability of any objector to show, that they suffer more than they deserve. We can never know the moral state of a mind, which possesses no means of communication with our minds, sufficient to explain that state to us. Yet it is with the highest probability argued from Reason, since every infant, which advances to the state of childhood, proves himself to be a sinful being, that infants, if moral beings at all, are also sinful beings in their infancy. The contrary conclusion, no objector can maintain. The objection, therefore, fails entirely of proof.

Besides, it is reasonably argued, that the same God who never afflicts adults, whose case we *can* understand, beyond their desert, does not afflict infants, whose case we *cannot* understand, beyond *their* deserts; and that, as there are plain proofs of benevolence in the former case, so it is justly to be presumed in the latter. This analogical argument is the more forcible, because no reason can be imagined, why even a malevolent being should take any peculiar pleasure in afflicting infants.

3dly. *These evils are necessary parts of a benevolent system of dispensations towards a sinful world.*

That in such a world it is absolutely necessary *to check iniquity in its progress, and prevent it* FROM ACCOMPLISHING *those miseries, which it is its universal tendency to accomplish, if unrestrained,* must be granted by all men; if the existence of the world is to be continued. For, plainly, this world, without restraints of this nature, would in a little while come to an end. The weak would become a prey to the strong; the simple to the cunning; the quiet to the violent; and all men to the sloth and indulgence, to the passions and mischiefs, of themselves, or each other. So far, then, as the natural evils of this world are necessary to restrain the wickedness of man, they are proofs of benevolence on the part of God. But the proof, that there are no more such evils, than are necessary for this purpose, is complete; because the wickedness is not more than suf-

ficiently restrained. On the contrary, how often is each man conscious of believing, that still greater restraints are necessary to keep evil men within due bounds; and of wishing, and praying, that God would make bare his arm for the further hindrance of evil designs, and the more extensive protection of the distressed from the injustice of their oppressors.

The afflictions of this world are, also, plainly benevolent *in their intentional and actual influence on those who suffer*. No means have, probably, a more frequent or efficacious influence in *reforming wicked men*, than afflictions. Prosperity, which one would expect to see draw them to obedience, as a *cord of love*, not only fails of this effect, but appears usually to harden their hearts in sin and security, and to terminate in a total alienation of their minds from all virtuous regard to God, or to mankind. *Fulness of bread* was one of the great sources of corruption to *Sodom and Gomorrah*. *When Jeshurun waxed fat, he forgot the God that made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.* Thus both nations and individuals have commonly acted in circumstances of high prosperity. The *pride and insolence of wealth, office, power, and conquest*, is, as you well know, proverbial phraseology: an unanswerable proof, that pride and insolence are the standing effects of prosperity. The more we possess of worldly enjoyments, although our happiness is often diminished, the stronger do our attachments to the world become; and the weaker our disposition to think of our duty. Afflictions, only, seem to break down this attachment, and to awaken the attention of the soul to virtue, and to God. Even the *security of life*, itself, as has been proved in the case of the *Antediluvians*, (the length of whose lives is attested by both scriptural and profane history) can become, of course, a most powerful mean of emboldening men to sin, and involving them in misery: and death, at the comparatively untimely period of seventy years, has been a most important blessing to mankind. Were men again to live a thousand years, the same violence, corruption, and wretchedness, which preceded the deluge, would again overwhelm the globe.

Nor do good men stand in a less absolute need of afflictions. The same tendencies to negligence of God and their duty, although weakened, exist still in *their* minds also. *Before I was afflicted*, says the Psalmist, *I went astray; but now have I kept thy word.* The mind of every good man will echo this declaration. Riches, honours, and pleasures, are all eminently seductive; and allure the heart insensibly after them. Afflictions teach us how vain they are, how deceitful, and how dangerous; pluck us by the arm in our downward course; and conduct us back to safety and peace. In both of these views, also, afflictions are plainly eminent blessings; and in this manner it is satisfactorily evinced, that *God doth not willingly afflict, nor grieve the children of men.*

All the observations, which I have hitherto made under this head, have been intended to respect only those evils, of which in the pre-

per sense God is the author. They are, however, to an extensive degree applicable to those, produced by men. These, *intended* by men for *evil*, are very often by God converted into means of *good;* who thus glorifies himself by *bringing good out of* the *evil*, designed by his creatures.

It ought here to be added, that every human account agrees with the Scriptures in asserting, *that the world, as it came from the hands of God, was only beautiful and delightful; and that man was created upon it in a state of perfect holiness and felicity;* that man apostatized from this state of perfection, and became sinful, and odious to his Maker; that in process of time all his descendants, one family excepted, became wholly corrupt, abandoned their duty, perpetrated every iniquity, dishonoured God, and destroyed each other; that a deluge was at length brought on the Earth, to lay waste both the world, and its polluted inhabitants; and that in consequence of this event the Earth itself was rendered comparatively a barren and uncomfortable habitation, and its inhabitants afflicted with many evils from the hand of God, which were before unknown. The history of these events in the Scriptures, which I here consider merely as a history, and not as a Revelation, is supported by such high internal evidence; by so uniformly concurrent a tradition; by so many facts in the general history of mankind; and by so many and so powerful proofs, found on the surface, and in the bowels, of the Earth; that it cannot fail to be admitted, as true, by every candid mind. Hence, therefore, it is unavoidably concluded, that the evils, inflicted by God, had no existence before the Apostacy of man; and are only intended either to check, or to punish, iniquity and rebellion. In this view they cannot evince the least want of benevolence on the part of God, but exhibit him as wise, just, and good.

From these considerations it is, I think, clearly evident, that the objections specified, furnish no solid argument against the benevolence of the Creator; and, as these involve all the objections hitherto alleged by mankind, it is evident, that the direct arguments on this subject remain in their full force.

The chief difficulty, attending this subject, lies in the uncertainty, in which the future existence of the soul is seen by the light of nature. As the end of all things exists beyond the grave; and as the twilight of Reason feebly illuminates all objects, which lie beyond that limit, and exhibits them dimly and doubtfully; the mind cannot fail, in taking a prospect of them, to feel unsatisfied with such uncertainty concerning things so important, and yet so imperfectly known. The whole force of the arguments on this subject is, in my view, in favour of the soul's immortality. These arguments are, also, of no inconsiderable strength. From this source, then, the objector against the benevolence of God will find himself weakened, and his antagonist strengthened: for, if a future existence be admitted, all, which seems irregular, improper, or mysterious, may

plainly and easily be rendered proper, even to the view of creatures, by means of the relation, which things in this world may then be seen to have to those, which are future and eternal.

Such is the view of the benevolence of God, presented to my mind by the works of Creation and Providence. I will not say, that the arguments amount to a demonstration, in the strict, logical sense: but they furnish the most solid foundation for rational and immoveable confidence. Indeed, the moral character of Intelligent beings, particularly of virtuous beings, and peculiarly that of God, is susceptible of evidence from experience only. We consider such beings as good, because they say and do that which is good, and we are incapable of seeing, that it is impossible for them to say and do that which is evil. Spirits are in their nature incapable of being immediately discerned, except by the infinite Spirit; whose prerogative it is alone to *search the heart, and try the reins*. But, when such beings do good only, and uniformly, they are concluded to be good, on such firm and rational grounds, as can never be shaken. Nor is this want of intuitive, or demonstrative certainty, any disadvantage to Intelligent creatures. Intuitive, or demonstrative, certainty concerning the moral character of God, might exist in every supposable case, without any useful influence on the heart, or on the life. Nor would he, who in the possession of high probable evidence, that God is a benevolent being, demanded a demonstration of this truth before he would yield his heart to his Maker, be at all more inclined to yield it, when he arrived at the demonstration. Confidence, on the contrary, is always a virtuous state of mind; being invariably a cordial assent to that truth, which is its object. Confidence in the moral character of God is a virtuous emotion, capable of reaching to any degree of excellence, predicable of rational creatures; and, being founded on evidence, which, like a converging series, will rise higher and higher for ever, it will increase eternally in strength and excellence; and will, more and more intimately, in an unceasing progress, unite the hearts of all moral beings to their glorious and perfect Creator.

SERMON IX.

BENEVOLENCE OF GOD, AS EXHIBITED BY REVELATION.

1 John iv. 8—*For God is love.*

IN my last discourse, I proposed, from these words, to consider *the Benevolence of God*, as exhibited to us in the

I. place, *by Reason*, and

II. *By Revelation.*

Under the former of these heads *I proposed several direct Arguments*, in support of the doctrine that God is benevolent; and also *examined the Objections usually alleged against it.* I shall now consider

The exhibition of this doctrine, furnished by Revelation.

On this subject I observe generally, that, in my own view, *the arguments in support of this doctrine, contained in the Scriptures, may be completely satisfactory*, notwithstanding the apprehension, usually entertained, that the character of God must be proved, antecedently to the admission of all arguments, professedly derived from a Revelation supposed to be given by him. The Revelation itself may, for aught that appears, be so formed, as to become an indubitable proof of his existence, and of any, or all, of his attributes. The Revelation itself is an *effect;* and from its nature, the nature of the *Cause*, which gave it existence, may be as satisfactorily argued, as from any other effect. In other words, it may be such an effect, as to prove the cause divine. Still more obviously may this be the case, when the Revelation, in question, is such a comment on the works of Creation and Providence, as to explain such mysteries existing in them, and remove such difficulties, as before prevented us from a correct judgment concerning their nature and tendency. A text may be very difficult to be understood, and may yet by an ingenious and just comment be rendered perfectly plain, even to a moderate understanding. The Scriptures therefore, which are an extensive and explicit commentary on the works of Creation and Providence, may so exhibit their nature to us, even if we should suppose them incapable of exhibiting the same doctrine in a convincing manner by themselves only, as to prove unanswerably, when considered in this light, the benevolence of God.

The manner, in which Revelation exhibits the divine benevolence, is the following.

1st. *God directly asserts his character to be benevolent.*

The text is the strongest conceivable example of this assertion. *Thou art good*, says *David, and thou dost good; and thy*

tender mercies are over all thy works. There is none good but one, saith Christ, that is, *God.*

2dly. *He recites a great variety of specimens of his goodness to individuals and nations; and exhibits them as being, unquestionably, acts of benevolence only.*

It will be unnecessary for me, here to mention, particularly, the providential dispensations of God to his Church, or to individuals, in order to exhibit this argument in its proper light. The history is sufficiently known to those, who hear me, to convince them, that a great multitude of dispensations to the Patriarchs, *Jews*, and Christians, fairly, and only, sustain this character. These dispensations are not only related to us, but are explained, as to their cause, nature, and design, so as to show, beyond a doubt, their benevolent nature. At the same time, he has taught us, all along, that his blessings, in every instance, were intended as testimonies, on his part, to the excellency of the same character, wherever it was found in men. The whole history, therefore, is made up of exhibitions of his own benevolence, his approbation of *this* character, and his hatred of the *opposite one*, in his creatures.

3dly. *He explains the whole system of his dispensations, in those instances not recorded in the Scriptures, in the same manner.*

This he does by unfolding to us his designs at large, in formal declarations concerning this subject. These declarations contain what may be called the general science of his Providence; and teach, that men, as sinful beings, are righteously afflicted by him for their iniquities; that afflictions exist for no other cause, but to punish, or restrain, the rebellion of mankind, or to bring them to repentance and reformation; that, on the other hand, he rewards alway, and with the greatest delight, every virtuous being, and every benevolent action.

In this manner he explains this part of his Providence, which is, indeed, the sum and substance of it; and diffuses a general illumination over a multitude of things, which, to beings, infantine and ignorant as we are, must otherwise be mysterious and perplexing.

4thly. *He exhibits to us sin, as far more vile, and deserving of far more punishment; and virtue, or benevolence, as far more excellent and meritorious, than our reason would otherwise have enabled us to conceive.*

In the Scriptures we are taught, in the clearest manner, that sin is an universal opposition to God, and an universal hostility to his benevolent designs; and that it is universally mischievous to the well-being of the sinner himself, and of his fellow-creatures. Thus we learn, that it is a direct war upon the Creator, and his creatures; a malignant contention against all that is good, and the voluntary source of all that is evil. Virtue, or benevolence, is, on the other hand, exhibited as a voluntary coincidence with God in all the designs, which his own loving kindness has proposed; a delight in his perfect character, and supreme blessedness; and a cheerful

promotion of the good of the universe; unspeakably amiable and delightful in itself, and boundlessly productive of happiness to others. With these views, we cease to wonder, that men are afflicted in this world: and are surprised, only, to see them no more afflicted.

5thly. *He exhibits to us, that he is kind, not only to such beings as are virtuous, but to such, also, as are sinners; and that this kindness in its extent and consequences is infinite.*

In the Scriptures we are informed, that, notwithstanding the rebellion of mankind, God is still disposed to regard them with kindness; and *that*, to such a degree, as to proffer to them the forgiveness of their sins, and a restoration of their minds to the character and privileges, from which they have fallen. To this end, as we are further taught, he has sent *his only begotten Son into this world*, to die in our stead; and has promised, that *whosoever believeth on him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.* In consequence of his mediation, God has also sent into the world his holy Spirit, to sanctify our souls, to purify our lives, to aid all our virtuous endeavours, and to conduct us in safety to the kingdom of the blessed. In this manner he has proved to us *his Mercy;* the consummation and glory of infinite good-will. When all the circumstances of this wonderful scheme of dispensations are duly considered, even in such a manner as that, in which we are able to consider them, we are forced to acknowledge, that no manifestation of benevolence, within our comprehension, can be compared to this; and to accord with the views, which angels formed of it, and which they expressed in their divine hymn at the birth of the Redeemer; *Glory to God in the highest; and on Earth peace; good-will towards men!*

6thly. *In the Law, which he has given to mankind for the regulation of all their moral conduct, he has required no other obedience, except their love to himself, and to each other.*

This law, which was formed by him according to his own pleasure, is undoubtedly a perfect expression of that pleasure. But love is the only object of its requisitions. Towards him it is required to be supreme; towards other intelligent beings, sincere and universal. Of course, as he has made love the only object of that law, by which he governs his moral creatures, it is undoubtedly the object, in which he supremely delights; and by necessary inference, is his own moral character.

This truth is the more strongly impressed, when we remember, that the law regards nothing else, as excellent, praiseworthy, or rewardable. He himself informs us, that *love is the fulfilling of the law.* This, then, is the only thing, which it requires; and, therefore, the only thing, which it esteems excellent or desirable. In all the various exercises of duty towards God, or towards our fellow-creatures, in whatever form they appear, or by whatever name they are called, there is no other real principle, or performance, of duty, besides love. It is, hence, made the spring, and

directory of all our conduct towards friends and enemies, towards strangers and neighbours, towards those who can requite us and those who cannot. No being, capable of happiness, is above, or beneath, the reception of its benefits: and every moral being is under immoveable obligations to exercise it. Thus it is made by the law of God the foundation, and the sum, of all good, natural and moral; of moral good, as being the amount of all our duty; and of natural good, as in this way the means of all our blessings.

Still more strongly is this truth impressed by *the sanctions of this law*. By it nothing, except love, is rewarded; and nothing, except the opposite character, punished. The reward is no less than endless death. In these sanctions, God expresses in the strongest manner his supreme delight in benevolence, and his supreme detestation of its opposite. How forcible a proof is all this, that his own character is infinitely benevolent.

7thly. *God requires the whole regard, which he claims, to be rendered to him, only as a benevolent God.*

In the Scriptures we are required to love, worship, and serve; that is, to exhibit our love in different forms, to a God of love, and to such a God only. Whatever being God is, he undoubtedly loves his own character; and must of course choose, that this should be, to creatures, the object of their approbation and love. No other conduct is, I apprehend, consistent with the intelligent nature. But in the Scriptures he has not required us to approve, admire, or love himself, in any other character, except as a benevolent God. If this, then, be not his real character, he has not required us to love, admire, or approve his true character at all; but another, which does not belong to him. Of course, he has not, according to this supposition, required us to render this regard to himself, but to an imaginary God; an object, diverse from himself in every moral characteristic. All therefore, which he has done to enjoin, and to procure, the veneration, love, and obedience, of his creatures; the pomp of miracles; the series of revelations; the humiliation, life, and death, the resurrection, ascension, and intercession, of Christ; the labours of the Spirit of Grace; the establishment and support of his Church in the world; have all been accomplished, merely to gain our homage, and service, to a fictitious god; and not to himself, the true and only JEHOVAH. To the same end have been directed, also, his law, with its promises and threatenings, and his whole system of Providence with its long train of judgments and mercies. According to this scheme, God is exhibited, as having laboured from the beginning for a being, which has no existence, except in fancy; a mere nihility; and therefore, as labouring without an end. According to this scheme, therefore, all the wonderful works both of Creation and Providence have been accomplished for no end; and, notwithstanding their amazing magnificence, are no other than a solemn farce, which, he has informed us, shall endure for ever. According to this scheme, God has been employed, from the be-

ginning, in inducing mankind by a series of most wonderful works to assume the most excellent of all characters, and the only really excellent character, for no conceivable end; and in this employment has without any reason exhibited a perpetual succession of mere deceit and illusion. Necessity of deceit cannot exist with God; because, without it, he can with infinite ease accomplish whatever he chooses. It must then, if existing at all, exist without cause, or motive. He, who can believe this, can believe any thing. But no man who understands what he believes, can seriously adopt so gross an absurdity.

8thly. *God has informed us in the Scriptures, that there is beyond the grave an immortal state of retribution; in which whatever seems irregular in the present state will be adjusted according to the most exact dictates of benevolence and equity.*

At the final judgment, we are taught in the Scriptures, mankind will be universally tried by those rules of duty, which have already been recited, according to the means of knowing them, which God has placed in their power. Those, who are possessed of the revealed law, *will be judged by the law;* and those, who are not, *will be judged without the law.* In other words, *every man will be judged according to his works.* At this time, the whole state of mankind will be settled agreeably to the most consummate benevolence. Such, as in this world have loved God and each other, will then, through the righteousness of Christ, be acquitted of all their former transgressions; delivered from the punishment, which they had merited; and rewarded with everlasting life in the kingdom of glory. Those, who have not performed this duty, will be consigned to *blackness of darkness for ever.* In this great transaction, and its consequences, *the mystery* of the present world *will be finished;* the dispensations of God, both to the righteous and the wicked, exhibited as perfectly accordant with infinite benevolence; and the difficulties, which to the eye of reason attend them here, explained in such a manner, as to *stop every mouth*, and remove every objection.

By these several arguments the benevolence of God is, I think, completely evinced in the Scriptures.

REMARKS.

From the considerations, which have been suggested in this discourse, connected with those, which have preceded it, I observe in the

I. place, *that the benevolence of God is strictly infinite.*

In the divine Mind every attribute is necessarily co-extended with the greatness of that mind. The benevolence of God is as truly thus extensive, as his knowledge, or his power. To his love of happiness existing, to his desire of happiness as a thing to be produced, no limit can be affixed. Intense and glowing beyond degree, although perfectly serene and complacent, it furnishes the

most solid foundation for the truth of that remarkable declaration in the text: *God is love;* or Infinite Love is the Infinite God.

It is equally evident, that the Benevolence of God is *Immutable* and *Eternal.* This divine Attribute, is like Omniscience and Omnipotence, plainly incapable of addition, or diminution. How can it be increased? By whom, or what, can it be lessened? What can put an end to its existence? All these questions convey their own answer.

2dly. *The Benevolence of God cannot but be ever active.*

Epicurus, and after him no small multitude of succeeding philosophers, have adopted the opinion, *that God is either absolutely, or in a great degree, quiescent, or inactive;* at least so far as a great part of what we have been accustomed to call his Providence is concerned. Some of these philosophers have denied the providence of God absolutely. Others have denied a particular providence. But all, to whom I refer, have attributed some degree of inactivity to the Creator. Their opinion seems generally to have been, *that, after he had ended the work of creating the Universe, and set it in motion, he left it to take care of itself; and found his own enjoyment in something, which demanded no active exertion on his part. Epicurus* himself taught, *that the Gods, whose existence he admitted, resided at a great distance from created beings in some unknown, happy region; where they passed their immortal life in a state of absolute quiet, and pleasurable enjoyment; without feeling any interest in the affairs of mortals, or exercising any government, or providence, over them.* This opinion, in substance, but with several modifications, has been adopted by no small number of philosophers down to the present time. They, indeed, admit the existence of one God only; he acknowledged many: they suppose God to be separated from human affairs only by a voluntary inattention to them; he, by local distance also. The most spacious foundation for this doctrine is the supposition, *that God, being infinitely perfect, and, therefore, infinitely happy in himself, can have no inducement to attend to the concerns of his creatures; since no such attention can at all add to his happiness.* This supposition is plainly, and wholly, erroneous; although the terms, in which I have expressed it, the same in which it is usually expressed, seem to convey an unquestionable truth. It is true, that God is infinitely perfect, and therefore, infinitely happy; and equally true, of course, that no addition can be made to his happiness. It is also true, that this happiness exists in himself in a manner perfectly independent; but it is not true, that God would be, or would ever have been, thus perfectly happy, had he not made the Universe; or were he not to conduct it to the purpose, for which it was made. Benevolence, like gold, finds its chief value in its use. *It is*, in the nature of the case, *more blessed to give than to receive;* or to be in any other employment, or situation.

The happiness of God is perfectly independent, because he is able

to devise, and execute, whatever he pleases; and thus to accomplish boundless glory to himself, and boundless good to his creatures, dictated by his benevolence, and comprehended by his Omniscience. There is nothing in the nature of the case, which furnishes a shadow of evidence, that the happiness of God is, or can be, independent of his own active exertions. As these exertions can be all made with infinite ease, with perfect rectitude, and with absolute certainty of success, it is impossible, that they should not accord with the most complete independence. Benevolence is the love of happiness, and the desire of its existence, wherever it does not already exist. Should this happiness, thus desired, fail to exist, the frustration of the desire must be a prevention, or annihilation, of the enjoyment which was found in the contemplation of its existence, or which the fulfilment of it would have produced. If, then, God desired the existence of happiness in other beings; or, in other words, if God was benevolent, (for these phrases mean exactly the same thing) we cannot but see, that it was impossible, in the moral sense, for him to fail of producing it; and that, if he had not produced it, his happiness must have been diminished. The *very nature of the disposition*, therefore, proves this doctrine to be false, and the conduct, which it asserts of God, to be impossible.

With equal evidence is it proved to be false *by facts*. If the doctrine were true; it would furnish unanswerable proof, *that God would never have created the Universe*. He was just as happy in the contemplation of his own perfections, antecedently to the creation, as at the present time; and according to this doctrine, could have had no inducement to *create*, any more than at the present time to *superintend*. The *existence* of things could be no more necessary to his happiness, than the *government* of them. But he has created them; and has thus proved, that he took pleasure in their existence. Of course his happiness partly consisted in the fact, that they existed; and would have been lessened, so far as this part extended, if they had not been brought into existence. But the universe, and every thing which it contains, was created for some end: that is, it was created for the purpose of bringing into existence the happiness, which the conscious beings, contained in it, were intended to enjoy; and for the pleasure, which God experienced in producing this happiness. This truth will not be denied, unless for the sake of denying it: since the contrary supposition would impute to the Creator the most absolute folly, and would therefore be a palpable blasphemy. Nor will it be any more denied, that the superintendency of God over all things is absolutely necessary, every moment, in every place, and to every being, in order to the accomplishment of this end: all other agency, beside his, being infinitely inadequate to this purpose. This happiness, being eternal, is an object infinitely great and desirable; and was, of course, infinitely desired by God. An infinite inducement, therefore, continually exists to the conti-

nual, and universal, agency, of God, in the government of all things.

I know of but one seeming objection to this doctrine. It is this: that, *if the happiness of God in any degree consists either in beholding, or producing, the happiness of his creatures, then it will seem to follow, that he was less happy, antecedently to the creation, than at the present or any future period.* This conclusion, will, however, vanish, if we call to mind, that all duration is present to God; and that his manner of existing excludes all possible application to him of past and future. Whatever was, or will be, with respect to creatures, is only, and alike, present to him. His happiness, therefore, is *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.*

Epicurus, who denied a creation, was undoubtedly more consistent with himself, than modern philosophers, who admit this event, and yet deny the providence of God. If God had not thought proper to create the Universe; it might with some show of reason be concluded, that he would not find any interest in governing it; but, if he created it, as the philosophers in question, in many instances acknowledge, it is unanswerably certain, that he will unceasingly conduct it by his providence to the purpose, for which it was created.

This consideration is infinitely glorious to God. The divine disposition here exhibited, is infinitely unlike the boasted benevolence of modern philosophy; which is wholly confined to the mere contemplation of happiness as a beautiful picture, or to the impassioned exhibition of good-will in sighs, and tears, and pathetic expressions; useless to the subjects of it, and fruitless towards its objects; or is spent in mere unavailing wishes, in themselves wholly devoid of efficacy or worth. This divine disposition is the boundless energy of the infinite Mind; the intense and immeasurable love of doing good, unceasingly, and endlessly, producing that happiness, in which it delights. It creates, with an activity never wearied, and never discouraged, means to this glorious end, without number, and beyond degree, fitted with a diversity incomprehensible to effectuate in the most perfect manner this eminently divine purpose. It is a tree, which, planted in this distant world, reaches the highest heaven; adorned with branches endless in their multitude, covered with leaves and blossoms of supernal beauty, and loaded with fruits of life and happiness countless in their number, unceasing in their succession, and eternal in their progress: while all the innumerable millions of percipient beings approach, and eat, and live.

3dly. *The benevolence of God is his whole moral character.*

We commonly, and I think in most cases necessarily, speak of the moral character of God, as composed of many separate attributes; of goodness, bounty, mercy, truth, justice, faithfulness, and patience. In the same manner, also, the Scriptures unfold his moral character. In this, they have accorded with that mode of thinking, which is natural to us, and in which we usually think more

clearly, and advantageously, than in any other. The exercises of benevolence are so numerous, and so diversified, as to need, if we would consider them clearly, and usefully, to be arranged in different classes, denoted by different names, and separately contemplated by our minds. Still, it is also useful to remember what the Scriptures have taught us in the text, that the whole moral character of God is love, endlessly diversified in its operations and manifestations, but simple and indivisible in its nature; an intense and eternal flame of uncompounded good-will.

How glorious a character is here presented to us of the great Ruler of all things! Nothing less than infinite and unmingled benevolence could qualify him for the great work of replenishing his vast kingdom with unceasing and eternal good. All good-will, inferior to this, must, it would seem, be wearied, discouraged, influenced to change its views by rebellion and provocation, and thus inclined to vary its original and best designs, and to fall short of the perfect objects, which it began to accomplish. But the love of God, evidently without limits, is equally without *variableness, or shadow of turning*. Hence, *every good gift, and every perfect gift*, flows from it unceasingly, and will flow for ever.

In this view of his character, how infinitely distant is JEHOVAH from all the Gods of the Heathen! These imaginary beings were not only imperfect, but were debased by every human weakness, and deformed by every human passion; possessed of no fixed character, or purpose; contentious among themselves; revengeful towards mankind; flattered into good humour again by their services; wearied by their own labours; and invigorated anew only by food, sleep, or pastime.

I cannot but add, How different a Saviour must he be, whose mind is informed with this boundless love, united with its concomitant perfections, from the Saviour, presented to us by *Socinianism*, and its kindred systems! *Christ*, as exhibited to us by these systems, is a created, and, therefore, an imperfect and mutable, being. When *Stephen* was expiring, he committed his soul finally, with all its interests, into the hands of the LORD JESUS. All his faithful followers, at the close of their lives, adopt the same conduct. How desirable must it be, at so solemn a period, when our all is depending, to realize, that he, on whom we depend, is possessed of love, great enough to comprehend even *us*, and to be incapable of weariness, alienation, or change: love, in a word, *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever!* How desirable must it be to find Him, in whom we are required to repose confidence, as the condition of inheriting eternal life, able, willing, and faithful, to bestow on us, all that is meant by this divine reward.

4thly. *The perfect Benevolence of God must, it is evident, delight in greater good, more than that, which is less, and most in that, which is supreme.*

That the Omniscience of God cannot but discern all the differ-

ences of good, and distinguish, with complete accuracy, and in all cases, the greater from the less, and that which is, on the whole, most desirable, from that which is not, will be admitted of course. That perfect benevolence must choose this, in preference to any other, is, unless I am deceived, equally evident. Indeed, I can conceive of no possibility, that benevolence can, in any being, prefer a smaller degree of *what he thinks good* to a greater. Much less can this be attributable to God. As he knows perfectly what is really good; so on this only must his desire, or delight, be fixed; and with the more intenseness in proportion to the greatness of the degree, in which it does or may exist.

Should it be said, that *there may be two or more systems of good, equally perfect and desirable:* I am not disposed to contend with him, by whom it is said. Those, who say it, ought however to remember, that it is said gratuitously: there being no evidence, by which the assertion can be supported. But, should it be granted, it will not at all affect the doctrine under consideration. These two or more systems are by the supposition equally good; and therefore, as an object of contemplation, or adoption, neither is in any degree preferable to the other. That, then, which has been actually adopted, has by this fact become preferable. In all other respects it was equally desirable; and, as it has been actually commenced, it is more desirable that it should be continued, than that it should be given up for the sake of adopting that, which was only equal to it; because, in that case, all, that has been already done, must have been done in vain: conduct, which, I need not say, would be unbecoming the divine character, and for this reason, at least, wholly undesirable. The present system, or the system actually adopted by God, is therefore, to say the least, *now* the best and most perfect system of good.

The same reasoning will equally prove, that the means, which he has employed for the accomplishment of this great end, are also the best and most proper means, which could be chosen; and, of course, that the whole work of Creation and Providence, composed of the means and the end, is a perfect work, entirely suited to his character.

5thly. *It is evident, that God, who is thus benevolent, must love the same disposition in his creatures, and hate the opposite one, unchangeably and for ever.*

That God delights with infinite complacency in his own moral character, cannot be questioned. Benevolence in his Intelligent creatures is a direct resemblance of this character; his own image, instamped on created minds; and cannot fail, therefore, to be an object of the same complacency, wherever it exists. He loves, also, his own purposes. Of course, he must love this disposition in his creatures, because all those, in whom it exists, love the same purposes, and voluntarily coincide with him in their endeavours to promote them.

On the contrary, that disposition in his creatures, which is opposite to his own, is in itself odious, in proportion as his is amiable; and voluntarily endeavours to oppose, and to frustrate his purposes; that is, to diminish, or destroy, the boundless good, which he has begun to accomplish. It is not here intended, that so vast a scheme of thought, or action, usually enters into the minds of sinful creatures; but that this is the real tendency of all their opposition to his law and government. In this view, the rebellion of sinners assumes a most odious and dreadful aspect; and is here seen to be a direct hostility against the benevolent character and designs of God, and against the well-being of his Intelligent creation.

When, therefore, he shall come to *judge the world in righteousness*, and to render to them such rewards, as are suited to their characters; it is plain, that he will approve of those, and those only, who resemble him by being benevolent; and disapprove of those, who have cherished the contrary disposition. The former, he will bless, or make happy; the latter he will punish, or make miserable. His approbation, at the final judgment, is no other than a testimony of the pleasure, which he takes in the moral character of those, who are approved; and his disapprobation, a similar testimony of the displeasure, which he feels towards those who are condemned. Of this pleasure and displeasure his rewards and punishments are only proofs, of a still higher kind; all founded on the moral character of the respective beings, who are judged and rewarded. How odious, how undesirable, then, is that disposition in us, which God by the dictates of his infinite benevolence is in a sense compelled thus to hate, and punish, because it is a voluntary opposition to his own perfect character, and a fixed enmity to the well-being of his creatures. How lovely and desirable, on the contrary, is that disposition, which he thus loves, and will thus reward, because it is a resemblance of his own beauty and excellence, a cheerful accordance with all his perfect designs, and an universal good-will to his Intelligent kingdom!

SERMON X.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.—THE JUSTICE OF GOD.

DEUT. XXXII. 4.—*Just and right is he.*

THE end, for which the Song, of which this verse is a part, was written, is expressed in the preceding Chapter, verse 19, in these words:

Now, therefore, write ye this song for you, and teach it to the children of Israel: put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel.

To this end it is perfectly suited. It is a general testimony of the perfection of God, and of his peculiar kindness to that people. As it strongly and unanswerably exhibits the Righteousness and Goodness of God in all his dealings with them; so, in the same evident and forcible manner, it manifests their ingratitude and unreasonableness in rebelling against him. These it presents in the most affecting light; because it shows, that God clearly foreknew all their transgressions, and, with this foreknowledge, still performed for them all these blessings.

At the same time, it forewarned them of their sin and danger, and urged on them the strongest motives to obedience. This timely testimony was itself a most convincing and affecting proof of his goodness, and left them without excuse.

The text is a general ascription of supreme excellence and glory to God, in his nature, agency, and works. *I will publish the name of the Lord, Jehovah*, saith *Moses* in the preceding verse; *ascribe ye greatness unto our God.*

This Name, or Character, is published in the verse which contains the text. *He is the Rock; his work is perfect, for all his ways are Judgment: a God of Truth, and without iniquity; Just and Right is he.* That is, *God is the Rock*, or foundation, on which the Universe stands. *His work*, the great work of building and governing the universe, *is perfect;* without imperfection, error, or fault; comprising all things which it ought, and nothing which it ought not, to comprise. The reason of this perfection is, that *all his ways are Judgment;* that is, are a perfect compound of wisdom, righteousness, and goodness. *Just and Right* may signify the same thing; or, as is often the meaning of *Right*, so here it may naturally denote the perfection of God generally considered.

DOCTRINE.

God is a Being of perfect Justice.

Before I enter upon the proof of this doctrine, it will be neces-

sary to examine the different meanings of this term; as, like most other abstract terms, it is variously used.

1st. *Justice, as applied to cases, in which property is concerned, denotes the exchange of one thing for another, of equal value.*

Justice, considered in this manner, affects all bargains; the payment of debts; and the adjustment, and fulfilment, of all contracts. Whenever these are so made, and performed, as that an exact equivalent is rendered for what is received, then, and then only, justice is done. This is called *Commutative Justice.*

2dly. *As applied to the conduct of a Magistrate towards subjects, it denotes exactly that treatment of the subject which his personal conduct merits.* To reward the good subject, and to punish the bad, according to equitable laws, and real desert, is to treat both *justly;* or to exhibit *justice* in the distributions of Government. Accordingly a Ruler, conducting in this manner, is by the common voice declared to be a just ruler. *Justice*, in this sense, is properly called *Distributive Justice.*

3dly. *Justice, in a much more extended sense than either of these, denotes doing that, which is Right upon the whole, in all cases; that which is fittest and most useful to be done;* in other words, *that which will most promote the universal Good.* In this sense, *Justice* is, together with its corresponding term, *Righteousness*, used as synonymous with *Benevolence* or *Virtue*, and involves the whole of moral excellence. This is sometimes called *General Justice.* This use of the word is very frequent; and many persons appear to make no distinction between this sense of the word and the last mentioned. Yet the meanings are widely different. In the former sense, Justice is the conduct of a Ruler only; in the latter, is applicable to all Intelligent beings: in the former, it is a course of conduct, respecting a single object, according to his merit, or demerit; in the latter, it always respects the universe.

Justice, when considered *as an attribute*, is *the disposition, which gives birth to these, or to either of these, kinds of conduct.*

With respect to the first of these senses, we cannot easily suppose a case, in which God, who is the giver of all good, can receive any thing, for which an equivalent can be rendered. The nearest resemblance to such a case, which is applicable to God, is one, in which he requires the service of mankind in a particular manner, and promises to reward them for such service with worldly possessions. Several such instances may be found in the Scriptures.

Thus he promised the *Israelites* abundant worldly good, in consequence of their faithful obedience. Thus he promised *David*, as a reward for his obedience, many earthly blessings. Thus, for the execution of his decree against *Tyre*, he gave *Egypt* into the hands of *Nebuchadnezzar.*

These instances are, however, all plainly imperfect ones, for the purpose of exhibiting a complete display of this Attribute in the sense in question. God, in all the cases specified, exhibited

his bounty, and mercy, so much more strongly than mere commutative justice, that we are apt to forget, that this was exhibited at all. Nor can we suppose a case, in which this difficulty will not arise, from the character and situation of God, as the Author and Giver of all good, and as the Receiver of nothing from the hands of his creatures.

Yet, if a case could be proposed, in which God could act, *as just in the Commutative sense*, his disposition to be just, in this sense, would be as perfect, as in either of the other senses. This is unanswerably evident from the consideration, that he requires, under the most awful penalties, the exercise of such justice from the hands of his subjects. In the two last senses, the justice of God is perpetually, and perfectly, exercised towards all his Intelligent creatures.

As the Ruler of the Universe, he rewards every rational being exactly according to his works; except that he hath shown mercy to numberless sinners, who had merited nothing but wrath and punishment: an exception supremely glorious to his character, and formed in entire consistency with exact justice.

As the great friend of happiness, he has devised, also, the most perfect happiness of his immense Kingdom, and the most perfect means of accomplishing it. This he pursues with infinite intenseness of energy, without intermission, without change, and without end.

In this sense, the Justice of God respects first, himself; and secondly, his creatures.

1st. *God is infinitely just, as his conduct respects himself.*

In an uniform series of dispensations, he exhibits to the Universe, his own character, as supremely glorious, excellent, beautiful, and lovely; and as therefore deserving all possible admiration, confidence, love, reverence, worship, and obedience, from all Intelligent beings. In this divine employment he has published to Intelligent beings a glorious rule of rectitude, as the rule of his own conduct: a rule, to which all that conduct is entirely conformed, *without variableness, or shadow of turning*. To this rule he requires them to conform all *their* conduct, also. In obeying it, are involved their duty, interest, honour, and happiness, alike. This he has exhibited as an unchangeable and everlasting rule; by which the Intelligent universe is every where, at every period, and with respect to every thing, to be governed; and which he will never forsake, even though that universe were to be the sacrifice.

2dly. *In the same sense, God is perfectly just to his creatures.*

The justice of God to himself is the highest and first act of justice to his creatures. But for this regard to himself, they could never venerate his character, nor render him their love, or their confidence. As the promoter of the universal good, God can in no way so contribute to this great and glorious end, as in unfolding his own supremely excellent character. This is the source, and

foundation, of all virtuous, sincere, and enduring happiness. In this conduct of God, therefore, the universe is infinitely interested.

In each particular dispensation to them, also, he directly pursues the same end, in all the parts of his endlessly diversified administration. Not a wrong, not a mistake, not a defect, finds admission into his providence, throughout eternity and immensity.

But it is chiefly as the great Ruler of all beings, that the justice of God demands a particular consideration, at this time. In this character, his justice is employed in the distribution of rewards to holy and virtuous creatures, and of punishments to false and rebellious subjects of his government.

All these distributions are made on the ground of law. Such, as obey the law of God, are by impartial justice rewarded: those, who disobey, are punished. The perfection of these distributions consists in this; that each creature is rewarded, or punished, according to his character and conduct, exactly; so that the reward, or the punishment, shall be precisely proportioned to the several degrees of virtue, or guilt, just as they have existed. In this case all the palliations, and aggravations, of guilt, and all the means of increasing or diminishing virtue, will enter completely into the estimate of the character of each individual. Of all these, God, who *searcheth the heart, and trieth the reins*, is a perfect judge. Nothing is unknown, or forgotten, by him; and nothing will be left out of the estimate of character, which will be the foundation of the reward, or the punishment. The proofs of the justice of God, exhibited by reason, or found in the system of Providence, are not to us, demonstrative. Yet they are well deserving of our attention.

1st. *The character and circumstances of God strongly lead us to believe in his perfect justice.*

God is perfectly independent; in the actual possession of all possible good; and completely secure against every possible loss, and evil. Whatever he pleases to have exist, or done, is certainly brought to pass; and in the precise manner, which is pleasing to him. Hence no temptation, or inducement, to any injustice, can exist with respect to him. Possessing all things, he can need nothing; contriving all things, he can fear nothing; effecting all things, which he chooses, with infinite ease, and no possible obstruction, he can never have occasion to adopt any other character, or conduct, but that of perfect justice. Injustice in our experience is always derived, and of course, from the dread of some disadvantage, or the desire of some advantage which otherwise would not exist. But these things have no possible application to God. Reason sees not, therefore, how God can be under any inducement to injustice. But without such inducement, injustice cannot exist.

2dly. *In this state of trial many exhibitions of the divine justice are made in divine providence.*

These are seen chiefly *in the application of punishments and rewards to Nations, considered in their national capacity.* Nations,

as such, exist only on this side of the grave. Hence it would seem, that in this peculiar character, as nations merely, they are with propriety rewarded or punished here. Thus nations, after they have become corrupted to a certain degree, have constantly been destroyed for their national corruption. God, indeed, has usually waited with wonderful patience, until their iniquities were full; and so evidently, that the ancient heathens *described and painted Justice as lame;* that is, *slow in arriving.* This conduct of the Creator is highly becoming his glorious character, as a most bountiful and merciful God towards beings, still in a state of trial.

Yet the destruction, or punishment, has been sure; however late it may seem to us. *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as men count slackness; but is long-suffering to usward; not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

So evident has been the justice of God in such instances, that the heathen have strongly marked, and fully acknowledged it, generally throughout the whole heathen world: a clear proof, that it has struck the eye, and convinced the mind, of Common sense.

3dly. *The justice of God is conspicuous in this great fact; that mankind are never afflicted beyond their deserts.*

In the last discourse, but one, I have observed, that this truth is rendered evident in the only case, in which it can with the least appearance of reason be disputed; viz. *the sufferings of virtuous men;* by their own uniform acknowledgment, that they never suffer even so much as they are conscious of having deserved. But the only tendency of any mind to injustice is to withhold good, or inflict evil, contrary to, or beyond, the desert of the recipient. As neither of these is ever the fact; as, on the contrary, men always receive more good, and less evil, than they have merited; it is plain, that the justice of God on the one hand, and his absolute freedom from injustice on the other, are strongly evidenced in his dispensations to man in the present world.

4thly. *All the arguments, which I have deduced from the character and circumstances of God, to prove, that he is benevolent, are capable of an equally forcible application to the present subject; and contribute, in the same manner, to prove that he is just.*

As these have been so lately rehearsed, it will be unnecessary to mention them again at the present time.

5thly. *As God is benevolent, it is impossible that he should not be just.*

In the last discourse I observed, that love constituted the whole moral character of God; and that, although we were obliged for the sake of distinctness, to consider, as the Scriptures themselves often do, this character in different views, and under different names; yet it is in reality a disposition simple and indivisible: these names denoting only its different modifications and exercises. As

I expect hereafter to consider this subject more fully, I shall only observe here, that, the doctrine being admitted, the benevolence of God, if proved, as I flatter myself it has been, from the light of Nature, is itself complete proof of the justice of God. A Being, willing, as a benevolent one necessarily is, to do more good to others than justice demands, cannot be willing to do less; the only manner, in which he could possibly be unjust.

This proof of the justice of God is, I think, ample and satisfactory. At the same time, in such a world as this, where the system of dispensations extends to so many beings, and so many events, in themselves varied almost endlessly, and in their relations still more numerous and diversified; it cannot but be, that mystery should in a great measure overspread the whole. In each individual case, there will be much, that we cannot understand; in the comparison of that case with others, there will be more. A state of trial, also, involves the doctrine, that in it a complete exhibition of justice cannot be made. All that is just in such a state cannot be seen to be just; especially by creatures, whose discernment and comprehension are like ours; so limited, and so disproportioned to the objects of investigation. Amid the multitude of these objects we are lost; by their variety we are perplexed; by their strangeness we are staggered; and by the relations, which they bear to each other, often apparently very dissimilar, often seemingly inconsistent, we are not unnaturally, nor unfrequently, overwhelmed with difficulties, doubts, and distresses.

It is probable, that, except in the case of nations already mentioned, the dispensations of good and evil in this world are designed rather as restraints on the sinful conduct; and as encouragements to the virtue, of mankind, than as full manifestations of the justice of God. In this view of them, they contain abundant proofs of wisdom, equity, and goodness, wholly suited to the state of man. It ought at the same time to be observed, that there is no argument, which renders it probable in any degree, that God is not just.

What the state of Providence thus teaches, the Scriptures have completely disclosed. The justice of God is in the Scriptures exhibited to us in various methods.

1st. *God has informed us in multitudes of direct declarations, that he is a God of consummate justice.*

All these declarations receive the whole weight of his whole character, as exhibited in the Scriptures; a weight, which no mind, that admits any part of this character, can resist.

2dly. *He has displayed in the history of the Scriptures many highly important and impressive instances of his justice, executed on mankind, both as nations and individuals.* These are very numerous, and various, and, in them all, complete examples of this awful attribute are presented to our view.

3dly. *In his law, he has required all men to be just; assuring*

them, that in this character they will be loved by him, and in the contrary character hated; promising them in this character glorious rewards, and threatening them, in the contrary character, most fearful punishments.

Exactly of this nature is every command, every promise, and every threatening. These promises and threatenings have also, as was observed under the last head, (for these considerations illustrate each other) been often most exemplary executed even in the present world. In these instances, we are not left to our own conjectures to interpret the dispensations of Providence; but are directly informed of their nature by God himself. In these instances, therefore, the dispensations become plain and intelligible, and all doubt is excluded.

4thly. *He has informed us, that there is beyond the grave a future being; that in the future world he has appointed, at the end of this system, a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness, and will reward every man according to his works.*

5thly. *He has required us to acknowledge, reverence, love, worship, and obey, him, as being Just, perfectly and infinitely.* In no other character does he require any love, homage, or service. That God, in requiring our homage to him, should require it to a character, *not his own*, is an absurdity, which can neither be admitted, nor explained.

There is, indeed, no possible reason, which can be devised, why any and all of these things should be done in the Scriptures, except that God is the just Being, which he is there represented to be. These things united comprise all the proof, which we can reasonably wish of the justice of God, and cannot possibly be destroyed, nor lessened. Accordingly no person who believed the Scriptures to be the word of God, ever thought of doubting this great truth.

REMARKS.

1st. *How gloriously is God qualified by this attribute for the government of all things!*

In what an amiable, majestic, and dignified light is he here manifested to our view! Without this attribute all others would be vain. A Ruler he might be, because his power would easily compel all beings to obey him. But he would be merely an arbitrary and despotic ruler; neither venerable, nor lovely. No creature would or could, serve him willingly, with either love or confidence. The fear, which gendereth bondage, would be the only principle of subjection; nor would any subjection, or service, secure his creatures from perpetual danger and distress.

What a dreadful instrument would Omnipotence be in the hands of an unjust being! What evils must not all creatures fear! What evils would they not suffer! What spectacles of vengeance, and wo, would not his arm call up into being! How instantaneously

would all hope vanish, all safety cease, all good perish! The universe would become a desert, a dungeon, an immense region of *mourning, lamentation, and wo.*

Now, all creatures are secure from every possible act of injustice from the hands of God. Powerful as he is; knowing all things as he does; these amazing attributes are employed only to discern that, which is just and right, and to bring it in every instance to pass. Hence, he is the universal safeguard of his unnumbered creatures; the rock, on which their rights and interests immoveably rest; the proper and unfailing object of supreme and endless confidence. Wrong he cannot do; Right he cannot fail to do. Submission to his will, his law, his government, is safe; and, when voluntary, is assured of the regard, the approbation, and the rewards, which are promised to cheerful obedience.

Were God not possessed of this glorious attribute; his Benevolence would be mere weakness. All froward, rebellious, obstinate creatures would presume on his want of energy to vindicate his own honour, and the rights of the suffering universe. A mind formed for immortal being, naturally makes progress in all its habits, and in the strength of all its powers. An evil mind, unrestrained by the awe, or the exertions, of Omnipotence, would naturally increase in its pride, selfishness, malice and cruelty; in a general disregard to the well-being of others, and in a supreme devotion to its private, separate purposes. To all who oppose, to every thing which clashes with, these things, such a mind is of course an enemy. Nor can any bounds be set to this enmity, or to its effects, except by God himself. Were he to remain quiescent in mere kindness and good wishes to the universe, the schemes of personal greatness, oppression, rage, revenge, and fury, which would be formed by evil beings, cannot be measured. Every evil being would become a fiend; and to tempt a race, to ruin a world, and to involve a system in misery, would be familiar events in the annals of the universe.

2dly. *What reason have Wicked men to fear the justice of God?*

The wicked are secured by God's perfect justice from the sufferance of any evil, which they have not deserved; but, at the same time, are wholly exposed to the sufferance of all such evils, as they have deserved. These are sufficiently dreadful to excite in their minds every degree of alarm, which man is capable of experiencing.

The denunciations of wo in the Scriptures of truth are couched in as awful terms, as language can furnish. The God, who is immutably and eternally just, as he uttered them in conformity to strict justice, so in executing them will conform to the same justice in the most perfect manner.

Whatever their rebellion against God, their rejection of his Son, their deceit, injustice, and cruelty to each other, and their pollution of themselves, deserves, they will receive exactly at his hand, and

will be *rewarded* exactly *according to their works.* It becomes every impenitent sinner to ask himself, what reward he ought to expect for a life, spent wholly in rebellion of thought, word, and action; with no account of voluntary obedience, and millions of accounts of gross disobedience against his Maker?

It is plainly *a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*[1] In his hand, and within his knowledge and power, are all the avenues to wo, all the ingredients of misery. He is equally able to pierce the soul, and to agonize the body. There is no escape from his power; no concealment from his eye. What then, will become of hardened sinners? How will the justice of God overwhelm them in consternation and horror at the great day!

3dly. *We see here the great reason, why the Scriptures are opposed, and denied, by wicked men.*

All the difficulty, which men find in admitting the Scriptures to be the word of God, exists in this attribute. I do not remember, that I ever heard, or read, of a single objection to the Scriptural God, except what was pointed against his justice. All men are usually willing to acknowledge his power, wisdom, goodness, faithfulness, truth, and mercy; but few beside good men, are ready to acknowledge his justice.

Whence this objection? Is not Justice a glorious and eminently divine perfection? Can an unjust ruler be the object of approbation? Is not injustice the ground of perpetual complaint against earthly rulers? The secret lies wholly in this fact. We are willing, nay, desirous, that rulers should be just, when justice does not endanger ourselves, and our happiness; but no character is so dreaded, so hated, when justice is considered as inconsistent with our safety, peace, and hopes. But can this be right? A just ruler must punish wicked and unjust men. We choose, that other wicked and unjust men should be punished; and hesitate not to say, that the common good indispensably requires it. But we make another law for ourselves; and would rather that the ruler should prove unjust, than either reform ourselves, or be punished.

The justice of God holds out to *us*, and to all others, certain and dreadful punishment as the proper reward of our sins. If God be just, we cannot, without repentance, faith, and reformation of life, possibly escape. Between reformation and punishment there is no alternative. Reform we will not; be punished we cannot. Hence we believe that God is not just, because we wish this not to be his character. Of course, we deny the Scriptures to be his word, to free ourselves from the terror of his justice. What wretched reasoning is this! How foolish, how fatal! How foolish, because it cannot possibly help, or save us; since God will plainly pursue his own counsels, and accomplish his own purposes, whether we believe his justice, or not. How foolish, because the whole purpose, for which such reasoning is adopted, is to enable us to continue peacefully in sin; a miserable character, and plainly exposed alway to a miserable end!

How fatal is such reasoning, because it will actually induce us to continue peacefully in sin, and prevent us from repentance and salvation!

On what is it grounded? On mere wishes. Who form, and indulge them? Wicked men only. Can God be such, as wicked men wish him to be? Can they suppose it? What kind of a ruler do wicked men wish to have rule? A vile one. What God do wicked men wish to have rule the universe? A vile one. Why? Because such a God only can be supposed to favour them. No good man, no Angel, ever regretted, that God was just. It is impossible, that a virtuous being should not rejoice in the justice of God. The instinctive voice of all the virtuous universe is the voice of Angels, and of the Spirits of Just Men made perfect, in the heavens, crying, *Alleluia! Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, be unto the Lord our God; for true and righteous are his Judgments. Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints!*

SERMON XI.

THE TRUTH OF GOD.

PSALM CXVII. 2.—*And the truth of the Lord endureth for ever.*

IN my last discourse, I considered briefly *the Justice of God.* I shall now proceed to make some observations concerning *His Truth*, which in the text is asserted to be an eternal, and therefore an inseparable, attribute of Jehovah.

As a prelude to these observations, it will be useful to take a concise notice of *the several significations of this term.* The word, *Truth*, denotes,

1st. *A Proposition, conformed to the real state of things.* Thus *St. Paul* says, *I speak the truth in Christ, I lie not.* Rom. ix. 1.

2dly. *All such propositions, generally considered.*

Thus *Pilate* asked *Christ*, *What is truth?* John xviii. 38.

3dly. *That collection of such propositions, which is contained in the Gospel, and is commonly called Evangelical truth:*

Thus says our Saviour, *The Spirit of truth shall guide you into all* THE TRUTH. John xiv. 13. Thus also *St. Paul* observes, *Love rejoiceth in* THE TRUTH. 1 Cor. xiii. 8. In both these instances, the Truth mentioned is Evangelical Truth.

4thly. *Reality, in opposition to that, which is fancied, or visionary.*

Thus *the True God* denotes the real God, in opposition to the imaginary gods of the Heathen.

5thly. *The Substance, in opposition to types.*

Thus Christ calls himself *the Truth;* as being the great Antitype of all the types in the Old Testament.

6thly. *Veracity*, that is, *a disposition always to declare Truth, or to speak according to the real state of things.*

7thly. *Faithfulness*, that is, *a disposition always to fulfil covenants, trusts, and promises.*

In *these two last senses*, I shall consider the Truth of God as declared in the text. Veracity and Faithfulness are attributes so nearly allied, as to be considered together, with great advantage. The former is speaking, and, as the case may be, acting, according to a state of things, seen, or supposed, to exist. The latter is declaring a future state of our own conduct, and afterwards acting so, that that conduct shall be conformed to the declaration. No moral attributes are more perfectly of a kindred nature; nor can we conceive of him, who possesses one of them, as in any less degree possessed of the other. There is no reason, therefore, for

making them separate subjects of examination in this series of discourses.

It will be obvious to those who hear me, that, as the works of Creation and Providence, consisting of beings and events merely, furnish us with no declarations made by God; and as every such declaration must in its nature be a revelation; so in these works there can be no proper specimen of his Truth, or Faithfulness. To every direct display of these attributes, declarations are indispensably necessary. The only way, in which the works of God exhibit, by themselves, any manifestation of these attributes, seems to be this. In the regular succession of causes and effects, a state of things is formed, and continued, on which we usually, and safely, rely; and, so far as this is concerned, enter upon our various kinds of business with security from disappointment. This state of things may be justly considered as manifesting a disposition on the part of Him, by whom it is established, not to deceive his creatures; but to exhibit to them that conduct, on which they may place a safe reliance. Thus we confide in the regular succession of seasons; the return of day and night; the productiveness of the earth; the efficacy of rain and sunshine; and, generally, in the nature, qualities, and effects, of the various things, by which we are surrounded.

But, notwithstanding this want of declarations in Creation and Providence, the proofs, by which the Truth of God is capable of being evinced *by Reason*, independently *of Revelation*, are, I think, satisfactory and sufficient.

I. *The Truth of God, (by which I intend throughout this discourse both his Veracity and Faithfulness) is completely evident from his Benevolence.*

In a preceding discourse, I flatter myself, I have proved the Benevolence of God from the light of nature. From this attribute, his truth is easily, and unanswerably, inferred. The happiness of Intelligent beings is derived in a great measure from society; nor is it possible, that they should be equally happy in the solitary, as in the social, state. But no society can exist without confidence; and no confidence without Truth. Truth, therefore, is the basis, on which society rests. Even thieves and robbers are obliged to speak Truth to each other, in order to maintain their own dreadful society.

Confidence, also, is one of the most important ingredients of happiness; so important, that no rational being can be happy without it. But without Truth, this happiness can never be enjoyed. On the contrary, distrust would create in the mind a dreadful state of suspense; another name for misery. All enjoyments would be seen to hang in doubt before the eyes; and safety and quiet could never be attained.

Again, Falsehood, as an attribute, renders a moral character supremely debased and despicable. So far as we are able to judge from our experience, fixed, absolute falsehood in any mind infers

absolute depravity. No vice in man is probably so universally, and perfectly, despised, as deceit. But such depravity is utterly inconsistent with any happiness whatever.

All these evils would attend the want of Truth in *Rational creatures*. A general character of deceit in them would utterly destroy, or prevent, the whole of their happiness. But a deceitful character in *the Creator* would far more effectually destroy it. On His character, all their happiness is ultimately founded; and, were He capable of deceiving them, would be destroyed. The very sense, in them, of such depravity in Him would also completely prevent them from being happy. If, then, He wishes their happiness; or, in other words, is benevolent; it is impossible, that He should not be sincere. His *benevolence*, like that of creatures as described by *St. Paul, rejoiceth in the Truth.*

II. *As God contrived, and executes, all things according to his will, throughout eternity, it is inconceivable, that he should not speak of them exactly as they are; because the state, in which they are, is exactly agreeable to his pleasure.*

Truth, as I have already remarked, is, in the original sense, made up of declarations, exactly conformed to the real state of things. But that state of things is in every respect such, as God has chosen. Declarations, therefore, conformed to the real state of things, are also conformed to his pleasure; while those, which are not conformed to the real state of things, are in the same degree not agreeable to his pleasure. It seems, of course, a contradiction in the nature of the case, that he should not utter declarations of the former kind; or that he should utter declarations of the latter kind: in other words, that he should not always speak that, which is exactly true.

III. *The Independence, and Immutability, of God, involve, by an absolute moral necessity, his veracity and faithfulness.*

The independence of God places him above all possible temptation to vary at all from his own original purposes. These purposes were all at first perfectly pleasing to him. As his character is absolutely immutable, they will for ever be thus pleasing. On the one hand, therefore, he can have no possible motive to make declarations, unaccordant with these purposes; because no being, and no event, can make it in any sense necessary, or advantageous, to him, to make such declarations, or disadvantageous to make those of a contrary nature; or *to declare that which is true*. On the other hand, sustaining alway exactly the same character, which he originally sustained, and choosing alway the same things, he cannot but be alway pleased with the state of things itself, and with such declarations as express it. Truth, according to what has been here said, must be infinitely advantageous to the furtherance of his designs; as being the only medium, by which his Rational creatures can understand them. If they do not understand them, it is plainly impossible that they should voluntarily coincide

with him in promoting them. But it is a prime part of his designs, that his Intelligent creatures should thus coincide with him. Truth, on his part, being, then, absolutely necessary to this voluntary conformity of his Rational creatures to his designs; and this conformity being a prime and essential part of these designs; Truth, the indispensable mean of accomplishing it, must evidently be of an importance, proportioned to the designs themselves: that is, of infinite importance. To this infinite motive to speak truth, there is no opposing motive; because he is perfectly secured by his independence from all danger of defeat and disappointment.

In the mean time, falsehood in him would effectually prevent the execution of his designs, in this essential part of them; because it would prevent his Intelligent creatures from knowing them; and, therefore, from voluntarily uniting with him in their accomplishment. An infinite motive to speak Truth only, is also furnished to the Creator by this consideration.

Further, Truth is the only Moral Immutability. Falsehood is in its own nature change of character. As every proposition, or its converse, is necessarily true: he, who should invariably utter that, which is false in form, would invariably indicate that, which is in substance true. In other words, those, who heard him speak, would invariably know, that the converse of what he declared was true. He also, who immutably intended to deceive, would speedily become unable to deceive at all; because, when his character was once known, he could never be believed. In either of these cases his conduct would differ no otherwise, in its effects, from that of him, who invariably uttered truth in the direct manner, except that, as he chose a different mode of communicating truth, or did not choose to communicate it at all, he would either be believed to declare it indirectly, or would be entirely disbelieved, and disregarded. In this manner, therefore, he would defeat his own design. Thus immutable Falsehood is evidently a self-contradiction. So obvious is this to all men, that liars, even of the weakest minds, find it absolutely necessary to speak truth frequently, in order to deceive. An immutable God therefore, unless we suppose immutability consistent with a continual change of conduct, cannot but be a God of truth.

IV. *The excellency of Truth, and the turpitude of falsehood, furnish an infinite motive to the Creator to speak truth only.*

We, limited as our faculties are, perfectly discern, that Truth is entirely honourable and glorious to the character of an Intelligent being. Falsehood, on the other hand, we perceive with equal clearness to be odious, disgraceful, and contemptible. This, God sees, unquestionably, far more clearly and perfectly than we. Falsehood in him, we see beyond a possibility of doubt, would be disgrace and deformity, proportioned to the greatness of his character; and Truth in an equal proportion honour and glory. This, also, he discerns in a manner infinitely superior to ours. By the

infinite glory, therefore, with which he must be invested by truth, and the infinite disgrace, in which he would be involved by falsehood, he is presented with infinite motives to Truth, and infinite dissuasives from falsehood.

At the same time, it appears to me evident, that the adoption of Truth, or falsehood, by the Creator, must be followed by exactly the same effects, which they produce in *us*. In the former case, he must regard himself with entire complacency or self-approbation; in the latter, with an irresistible consciousness of turpitude and unworthiness. These views, and the emotions, with which they must be attended, must in an infinite mind be, in either case, boundless: an unlimited sense of excellence on the one hand, accompanied of course with unlimited happiness; on the other, a boundless sense of turpitude, accompanied, for aught that I can see, with boundless shame and wretchedness.

V. *He has so formed his Intelligent creatures, that they irresistibly esteem and respect Truth, and disesteem and despise falsehood.*

This respect for Truth, and contempt for falsehood, is irresistible, from two causes. It is, in the first place, the necessary dictate of the understanding, when employed in examining the nature of these subjects; and is perfectly independent of any feeling, or influence, of the heart. Knaves, as truly, and as irresistibly, as honest men, despise knaves. No other dictate of the understanding was ever found in the present world: no other is capable of existing.

Secondly, he has made Truth absolutely necessary to the happiness of mankind, and invariably productive of it; and falsehood utterly inconsistent with our happiness, and invariably productive of misery. In this great, practical lesson, he has in his providence forced mankind to esteem and respect Truth, without a possibility of its being otherwise; and to disesteem and despise falsehood.

This argument strongly proves the truth of God in two methods.

In the first place, by teaching us to respect Truth, and despise falsehood, he has irresistibly led us to respect him, if a God of Truth; and to despise him, if a God of falsehood. But, if he be not a God of Truth, this fact is utterly irreconcileable with the only end, which he can be supposed to have had in view in creating Intelligent beings.

Secondly, he has in this manner strongly impressed on the minds of his creatures his own character, as a God of Truth. As a Being perfectly Independent, he could have no inducement to impress any character on their minds, except that, which pleased him. That, which pleased him more than any other, was unquestionably his own character. As an Immutable Being, it cannot be supposed, that he could disclose to them any character as his own, except his real character. If, then, the character actually disclosed by him as his own, is not his real character; it must have arisen from one of these sources: either he was afraid to disclose his own

character, or by some other motive, inconsistent with his Independence, was inclined to disclose a character, with which he was not pleased; or he preferred some other character to his own; or, in some strange moment, and situation, incomprehensible by us, departed from his general disposition, and, denying his nature, acted in a manner directly opposite to all his essential attributes, which irresistibly prove him to be immutable. Neither of these will be asserted. The Character, therefore, which he has actually disclosed, is his true character.

To these arguments, presented to us by reason, I shall now add the scriptural exhibition of the Truth of God. Before I proceed to a consideration of this subject I shall, however, attempt to remove a prejudice against it, which may not improbably, nor unnaturally, arise in the minds of some of my audience. It is this, that, *as the Truth of God must be presupposed, and admitted, before we can admit the truth of his declarations; so it is absurd to bring those declarations to evince his truth; as it will be arguing in a circle.* I acknowledge this objection to be specious; but still insist, that it is unsound. It must undoubtedly be granted, that *the mere declaration* on the part of any being, *that he is sincere*, furnishes, by itself, no evidence of his sincerity; since we well know, that insincere beings will as readily arrogate to themselves sincerity in this manner, as those who are sincere. But the uniform accordance of a man's declarations with facts is justly regarded by his fellowmen, as the proper and satisfactory proof of his sincerity. In the same manner may God evince his sincerity by his own declarations; and this, I shall attempt to show, he *has* done in the Scriptures, in a manner, which leaves no room for a reasonable doubt.

I will also further observe, that the Scriptures contain all the known declarations made by God to mankind. As, therefore, Truth can be directly made known only by declarations; it is reasonably presumed, that we shall find in those of the Scriptures, plain exhibitions of the Truth of God, as, in the declarations of a sincere man, we usually find examples and evidences of his truth.

In the last place; I shall further premise, that *we have other means of examining the Truth of God*, as manifested in his declarations, *beside a mere appeal to his character.* This will amply appear in the course of the following observations.

I. *God has declared himself to be a God of Truth.*

In this observation, I consider him only as claiming, and not at all as proving, this character.

II. *He has made a vast multitude of declarations, all of which have accorded with the facts professedly declared.*

The Scriptural history is, even at this day, capable of being satisfactorily examined, as to its accordance with facts. Some part of it is, indeed, beyond the reach of a direct examination. But, as almost all of it can be thus examined, and has been, and can at

any time be, proved by sufficient evidence to be true; the Truth of the rest cannot reasonably be questioned. In these declarations the same evidence is furnished us of the truth of God, which is furnished of the veracity of a man by the uniform accordance of his declarations with the real state of things.

III. *God has in the Scriptures uttered a vast number of predictions, which have been exactly fulfilled.*

In this manner he has not only proved his Omniscience, but his Truth; especially in the exact accomplishment of such predictions, as appeared, at the time when they were uttered, strange, perplexing, seemingly contradictory, and, independently of his Truth, altogether unlikely to be fulfilled. Such, remarkably, were those which respected the advent, the character, and the mediation, of the Messiah. Such, also, were those, which respected his dispensations to the Jewish Church and nation; and those, which respected the establishment and progress of the Christian Church. Of the fulfilment of these and other similar predictions no explanation can be given, which will not firmly establish the Truth of God.

IV. *He has declared many doctrines concerning himself and mankind, concerning sin and holiness, and concerning many other subjects of less importance, all of which, so far as they are capable of being examined by us, are exactly true.*

These doctrines are God's own exhibition of the general state of the moral world; and of his pleasure concerning the beings, of which it is composed. All of them are true, so far as they can be understood by us; and are accordingly, and perfectly, consistent with each other. No reason can be alleged, why he should thus disclose his pleasure to us, except that he is a God of Truth.

V. *He has in the Scriptures threatened punishments, and promised blessings, to men in this world; and has, as the same Scriptures satisfactorily inform us, exactly inflicted those punishments, and bestowed those blessings, in the course of his providence.*

VI. *He has in the Scriptures, also, entered into particular covenants with different persons, which in every instance he has completely fulfilled.*

VII. *He has in the moral law required Truth, and forbidden falsehood, in man, by the most solemn possible sanctions;* viz. *endless life, and endless death.*

VIII. *He has strongly exemplified his love of Truth, and his hatred of falsehood, by rewarding the former and awfully punishing the latter, in various instances, recorded in the Scriptures.*

IX. *He has required the worship and obedience of mankind to himself, only as a God of Truth.*

In these considerations, supported, as they are in the fullest manner, by the character of the Redeemer, there is ample proof of the Truth of God: such proof, that no one, who has believed the Scriptures to be a revelation from God, has ever called this doctrine in question.

REMARKS.

1st. *How gloriously, and perfectly, is God qualified by this attribute to be the Moral governor of Intelligent creatures.*

Moral government is a government by laws; whose nature, and sanctions, are the great inducements to obedience, and the great means of order, peace, and happiness, to subjects; *and of honour and reverence to the Ruler.* In other words, it is a government by motives, addressed to the understanding and affections of rational subjects, and operating on their minds, as inducements to voluntary obedience. No other government is worthy of God; there being, indeed, no other beside that of mere force and coercion. Obedience to this can never be voluntary, virtuous, amiable, praiseworthy, or rewardable: whereas voluntary obedience sustains all these characteristics; and renders the subjects of it excellent and lovely in the sight of a virtuous, or benevolent, ruler. This government, then, is on the one hand suited to the dignity and glory of the Infinite Mind; and on the other to the character, state, and wants, of rational beings. Without obedience to such a government they cannot be virtuous; and without virtue they cannot be happy.

To the existence of such a government it is absolutely necessary, that the character of the Ruler should be such, as that it can, and ought to, be approved by wise and good subjects; and of course a character, in which they can safely, and rationally, confide. But it is impossible, that a ruler, unpossessed of Truth, should be approved at all. Falsehood is not only a vice, a defect, a deformity; but a most odious, and contemptible, vice, involving every other kind of turpitude. A liar is pre-eminently odious and contemptible in the view of mankind; and the finished depravity of the worst of all beings is exhibited to us by God himself in the memorable declaration, *He was a liar from the beginning, and the father of it.* A God of falsehood would be a monster, whose depravity no mind, less than infinite, could comprehend; and who would of necessity be regarded with absolute detestation and horror.

But how could obedience be voluntary to a ruler, whose character, instead of being esteemed, and reverenced, was only disapproved, hated, and despised? Who could love either him, or his commands? Who could voluntarily yield obedience to falsehood? Who could ever be pleased with subjection to a ruler, whose character he could not respect? The very supposition is an absurdity.

In a still more striking manner would it be impossible for rational beings voluntarily to obey a Ruler, in whom they could not confide; or for such a ruler to exercise a moral government over them. Should he make laws, and in them promise rewards to obedience, and threaten punishments to disobedience; how could it be known, that he would fulfil his promises, or execute his threatenings?

How could it be known, that his declarations were true; or his character sincere? Certainly, neither his words nor actions could be the foundation of such knowledge. Both might as easily, and as naturally, be supposed intentionally to disguise, conceal, or deceive, as to explain and satisfy.

God, we are ever to remember, is the last appeal, resort, and hope, of Intelligent beings. By whomsoever else the soul is deceived, or disappointed, it rests on him with perfect reliance; because it considers *his truth as the great mountains, and his faithfulness as enduring for ever.* If no confidence could be placed in him, none could be placed elsewhere. Every thought, purpose, interest, consolation, and hope, would be afloat on the waves of a boundless and perpetually disturbed ocean, where rest and safety could never be found. All beings would distrust all; and the Universe, filled as it is with inhabitants, would become a solitude. Suspicion and jealousy would make all beings strangers, and enemies, to each other. Suspense would fill every mind, and hang over every enjoyment: a state always wretched and deplorable, but here supremely and finally wretched, because the suspense would be endless, as well as unceasing. The Mind, stretching its view through eternity and immensity, would discern no pole-star, by which it might steer its course; no haven, whither it might betake itself for safety and repose. The truth of God hushes this restless and stormy ocean to peace. All his creatures know, or may know, that his purposes, declarations, and promises, are eternal and immutable; and that, therefore, he cannot deceive their confidence, nor disappoint their reasonable hopes; that he is *the Rock*, on which is founded the great building of the Universe: the foundation and the building both eternal. However uncertain therefore, however fluctuating, may be the state of the soul with respect to creatures; on him it rests with perfect reliance, and final safety. Were these facts reversed, he could present no motives to voluntary obedience; nor act as the Moral Governor of rational beings. Now he is seen to be divinely excellent; *the fortress, the high tower*, the unchangeable safety, of such beings; and their obedience to his laws is a voluntary and cheerful effort of the mind, begun here to continue for ever.

2dly. *We learn from these considerations how necessary Faith is to acceptance with God.*

St. Paul declares, that *without faith it is impossible to please God; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Faith*, in its first and simple sense, *is assent to probable evidence.* Few of the propositions, to which we assent, are known to us, either by intuition or demonstration. This is especially true of moral propositions; almost all of which, although they are in many instances spoken of as known by us, are in fact only believed: the evidence, by which they are supported, being merely probable evidence. Yet on these

propositions is dependent all our duty, and ultimately all our happiness. Wherever the probability is clear and unimpeachable, Reason demands, that we should readily assent to it, as being the best evidence, which the case will admit. In the same manner Reason requires, that our conduct should be regulated by it, as being the best rule, of which we are, or in our present circumstances can be, possessed. A reasonable disposition will, therefore, in every such case, yield its assent to every proposition, and conform its conduct to every rule thus evidenced; while a proud and obstinate spirit will refuse both; and choose rather to take refuge in scepticism and disobedience, than to conform to the only principles of assent, and rectitude, which have been furnished to us by our Maker.

The faith of the Gospel is *the assent of the heart*, as well as *of the understanding*, to the declarations, contained in the Scriptures; the belief of a man, who regards them with good-will, and who is pleased with such truths as they present to the mind. The foundation of faith in these declarations is a similar faith in the character, especially the moral character of God, exhibited in them, and evidenced both by *them*, and by other extraneous proof. This character, discerned to be glorious, great and lovely, by a mind possessed of a suitable disposition, is not in the strict sense demonstrated to us; but is evinced with high and unexceptionable probability. To the ready and cheerful admission of it, a good and honest heart is wholly prepared, and is the only thing necessary.

The Truth, or Veracity, of God, is especially that part of his moral character, on which the faith or confidence, which is termed Evangelical, ultimately rests. On this attribute all his declarations, promises, and covenants, entirely depend for their truth and certainty; and therefore all the confidence, which creatures can place in his character, designs, or conduct. It is indispensable, in order to our exercising any regard towards him at all, that we *believe, that he is*. This, however, we may do by the aid of arguments, furnished by the light of nature. To *believe, that he is the rewarder of them, that diligently seek him*, is indispensable to the exercise of any virtuous regard to him; but this we cannot do without confidence in the truth of his promises, and in the veracity of himself, as the promiser.

But for these promises, we could not know, that he thought of bestowing such rewards; unless we believed him sincere in promising, we could not believe that he would bestow them. Between confidence in the truth of God, and distrust of his truth, there is no alternative. It is metaphysically, as well as Scripturally, true, that *he, who believeth not God, hath made him a liar*. Let me, then, ask every person in this assembly, whether this distrust of God, this attribution to him of so odious and contemptible a character, this last insult, (as mankind estimate insults) can, in his own view, possibly be pleasing to God? Yet this is a fair description of all unbelief;

or, as it ought rather to be termed, disbelief, or distrust. As this conduct can never be pleasing in his sight; so it is certain, that he, who is the subject of it, can never be accepted of God: for nothing is more evident, than that God will never accept *him*, with whom he is not pleased. As, then, there is no medium between this character and confidence, or faith; it is, I think, past all doubt, that faith is indispensably necessary to acceptance with God.

At the same time, distrust is an entire separation of an Intelligent being from his Maker. We cannot possibly coincide voluntarily with the designs of a being, unless we confide in his Truth and benevolence, and of course in the rectitude of those designs. No virtuous obedience can be yielded to laws, of whose rectitude we are not satisfied; no complacency exercised towards a character, in which we do not confide; no gratitude rendered for benefits, conferred by a suspected benefactor; no reliance placed on promises, made by a being of doubted veracity; and no praiseworthy efforts made to promote designs, regarded as suspicious and unworthy. Without confidence, the soul is separated of course, from its Creator. Distrust is in its own nature *enmity against him, not subject to his law, neither indeed can be.* How, then, can God be pleased with this character; or accept him, in whom it exists?

3dly. *How greatly ought this attribute of God to terrify deceitful men!*

By deceitful men I intend, not only liars of every description, perjured persons, and slanderers; but fraudulent men of every class; hypocrites, cheats, seducers, flatterers, sophists, and all other men guilty of intentional deception. From the character of God, as exhibited by the light of nature only, these men have every thing to fear, and nothing to hope. That God can be pleased with a moral character opposite to his own, or that he will bless men with whom he is not pleased, cannot be imagined for a moment. But there is no moral character, more absolutely opposed to God, or more remote from his pleasure, than that of falsehood; falsehood in every form; whether of looks, declarations, arguments, or actions; and in every degree, from the humble pretence to the palpable lie. Nor is any immoral conduct adopted against clearer evidence, and more absolute conviction. Truth is a thing perfectly definite. We always know when we speak it; and equally well know when we utter falsehood. It is, therefore, a sin against noon-day light; and is alway committed in the sunshine. How, then, must the Being, invested with the glorious, and eminently divine, attribute of Truth, as with a garment, regard this base and vile character, so opposed to his own, and so hostile to the virtue, and happiness, of his Intelligent kingdom? Miserable, indeed, must be the expectations, and the lot, of all wilful deceivers, even if there were no Scriptures; or if *they* were not the Word of God.

But there are Scriptures; and they are the Word of God. In them, as we could not fail to expect, most terrible additions are

made to the alarms, rung in the ears of these transgressors, by the voice of nature. There, his determinations to inflict signal vengeance on these men, are announced in every awful form by the *God who cannot lie.* There he has declared, that *into the holy city*, the heaven of heavens, the mansion of everlasting joy, *there shall in no wise enter any one, who loveth or maketh a lie.* There he has declared, that *every liar shall have his part in the lake, that burneth with fire and brimstone.* Let every deceitful man *hear, and fear, and do no more so wickedly.*

4thly. *What a source of comfort, joy, and quickening, to good men, is the truth of God!*

When we think on the character even of the best men, when we call to mind how often they backslide and sin; how cold and stupid they are in their affections, and how dull and slothful in their obedience; with what eagerness they cleave to the world, and with what ease they yield to temptation; how frequently they wound Religion, and how greatly they dishonour God; we cannot but feel, that all the truth and faithfulness of God are indispensably necessary to prevent him from forsaking such beings, as they are, and incline him to conduct them safely to his eternal kingdom. Here, created faithfulness would not suffice; nor prove to them a solid ground of unshaken confidence, nor of lively and supporting hope. A higher perfection of character seems plainly necessary in the blessed God, to enable his patience to bear with all their faults, and his mercy to triumph over all their transgressions.

In his holy Word, he has given them promises of infinite extent, and value. In these promises are contained blessings temporal and spiritual; blessings present and eternal; blessings of the first magnitude and of the most delightful nature; extending alike to the soul and the body, to all times and all places, to every want and every situation. Whatever can be useful to them, honourable to himself, or beneficial to the Universe, he freely proffers from his unlimited bounty. Finally, Himself, the Sum of all good, the overflowing Fountain, the inexhaustible Ocean, whence every stream of happiness flows, he engages to them, as their everlasting possession.

What can secure the boundless good, contained in these promises, to beings of such a character? The unchangeable truth of God. On this they repose with perfect safety, with *a hope*, which can never *make* them *ashamed*, with a faith, which cannot be broken down. Under *the shadow of this great rock in a weary land, they sit down* with unspeakable *delight;* and see all these promises advancing to a regular, constant, and certain fulfilment, throughout the progress of never-ending being.

Here, too, they find the most persuasive inducement to faithfulness in his service. They know, that *he cometh in clouds*, and *that his reward is with him. The bruised reed*, they are assured, *he will never break; the smoking flax he will not quench; until he shall*

have brought forth judgment unto final victory. Hence *they wait on the Lord unceasingly, and renew their strength.* Hence *they mount up with wings as eagles; They run* in the Christian course, *and are not weary; they walk, and faint not in the strait and narrow way, which leads to life.*

In the mission, life, and death, of the Redeemer, in his resurrection, intercession, and kingdom, the truth of God has set his seal on all his promises. The covenant of grace is here seen to be an unchangeable and *everlasting covenant.* In the solemn ordinance,* immediately before us, a living, unchanging, and most affecting memorial, we may discern a hand, which, testifying infinitely better things than those which were disclosed to *Belshazzar*, writes before our eyes, that, notwithstanding all our infirmities, if we indeed believe in him, *we are*, when *weighed in the balance, not found wanting.*

* The Eucharist.

SERMON XII.

THE MERCY OF GOD.

PSALM ciii. 8.—*The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.*

IN this beautiful and interesting Psalm, *David*, with a piety and zeal highly becoming, calls upon his soul and all that is within him to bless the Lord for the manifestations of his mercy. A multitude of these, remarkable in their nature, and of vast importance to mankind, he recites in the happiest language of poetry. In this language, *God* is exhibited *as forgiving all his iniquities, healing all his diseases, redeeming his life from destruction, crowning him with loving kindness and tender mercies, satisfying his mouth with good things, and renewing his youth like the eagle's.* Nor does he confine his views to his own blessings merely; but, like a good man, deeply affected with the concerns of his fellow-creatures, casts his eye abroad to the general dispensations of providence, and rejoices in the exemplifications of this glorious Attribute to the human race. With supreme delight he here beholds *God executing righteousness and judgment for the oppressed; unwilling always to chide, or to keep his anger for ever; not dealing with mankind according to their sins, nor rewarding them according to their iniquities.* The Mercy of God he sees extended, *and exalted, as the heavens; removing our transgressions from us, as far as the East is removed from the West;* and *pitying those who fear him, as a father pitieth his children.* This divine perfection, he further teaches us, is an inherent and essential part of the character of God, and *is* accordingly *from everlasting to everlasting.* Nor is it confined to any place; nor limited by any opposing power, or obstacle: for *the Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all.* With this delightful subject in such full and strong view, he finally and most forcibly calls upon *angels, who excel in strength, upon his hosts, the ministers who do his pleasure, and upon all the works,* formed in his boundless dominion, to bless JEHOVAH for this transcendent perfection, so illustriously manifested, in so many forms, towards an apostate and ruined world.

The text is the theme of the whole psalm; and is a strong and ample assertion, reiterated in various forms, according to the manner of the inspired writers, when labouring to impart to others their own vivid emotions, of this doctrine.

That God is a God of Mercy.

Mercy is *the exercise of good-will towards those, who have not merited it; and especially towards those, who have merited anger and punishment.* In its most important sense it denotes the com-

munication of forgiveness, and consequent blessings, to such as have been guilty of crimes; particularly, as exercised by God to those, who have transgressed his most holy law, provoked his anger, and forfeited every claim to his favour.

In canvassing this doctrine, I shall pursue the same method, which I have adopted in discussing the other attributes of the divine character; and consider the manner, in which it is exhibited,

I. *By Reason*, and,

II. *By Revelation.*

Reason naturally leads us to conclude, that God is merciful, because

1*st. He is Benevolent.*

Mercy is *a modification of benevolence.* It is, therefore, reasonably concluded concerning any benevolent being, that his disposition will, in certain cases at least, be mercifully exercised; or that, when certain objects are presented to his view, and solicit his interference, he will extend his benevolence to them, although their character is such, as not to merit this interference at his hands; or even such, as to deserve in some degree his anger, rejection, or punishment. But God is boundlessly benevolent. Mercy in the abstract, and extending to every degree which propriety and Justice will admit, must, therefore, be acknowledged by Reason to be an essential part of the divine benevolence. What, and how great, this extent is; what objects it will reach, and what crimes it will forgive; cannot, I confess, be at all determined by us; nor upon what terms it will be extended to such objects, as it will actually reach. An angel, who had transgressed the divine law, or *Adam* after he had fallen, might satisfactorily determine by rational arguments, that God was merciful: and yet neither would be able at all to decide whether that mercy would be extended to *him;* or if it were thus extended, upon what terms, in what manner, and to what degree.

2dly. *Because he exercises patience and forbearance towards mankind.*

That men are opposed to the character and government of God; that they continually dishonour his name, violate his laws, so far as they know them, and are guilty of manifold iniquities towards each other; cannot be rationally questioned. The conduct, which strict justice on the part of God, would dictate as the proper retribution of these crimes, can be no other than severe and immediate punishment. This punishment, however, we do not find executed. On the contrary, he continues them in life, notwithstanding all their provocations; and surrounds them with an endless multitude of blessings. In this part of divine providence, therefore, we find a direct exercise of mercy; that is, of kindness to guilty beings; and this repeated in instances innumerable; instances so multiplied, and so constantly recurring, as to constitute a primary and essential characteristic of the government of God over mankind.

3dly. *Because he has formed the human mind in such a manner, that it necessarily considers mercy as high excellence of character.*

This argument, largely considered in my discourse on the benevolence of God, is applicable to this peculiar exercise of benevolence, in almost the same manner, as to benevolence in the abstract. It is not indeed true, that a benevolent being, destitute of mercy, would be therefore destitute of amiableness; because benevolence in every form, and exercise, is unquestionably amiable. But it is the necessary dictate of the human understanding, that Mercy is the noblest possible exercise of benevolence, and that this attribute is indispensable to a character of absolute perfection. Such is the decision of the mind, as God has formed it; and the invariable result of the understanding, when employed on this subject without passion, or prejudice. In the mean time, this attribute is indispensable to the happiness, and even to the comfort, nay, to the tolerable existence, of mankind in the present world. Both crimes and sufferings are here so numerous, and constitute so great a part of the character, and of the lot, of all men, that all continually need, and vast numbers in the most absolute manner, the exercise of this disposition. Our circumstances, therefore, continually elucidate, and enforce upon us, the justice of this dictate of the understanding.

In this manner, God has, of his own choice, rendered this attribute, in our view, absolutely necessary to a perfect, and therefore to his own, character. If, then, Mercy constitute not a part of his character, he has necessitated us, of his own choice, to consider his real character as destitute of perfection.

After the application of this argument in former discourses to the other moral attributes of God, it will be unnecessary any farther to insist on it here.

From these considerations it may, I think, be fairly concluded by Reason, that God is merciful. Accordingly, mankind appear to have generally regarded this as the true character of God. Such, at least, seems to be the apprehension, which men have formed of the object of their worship: as is evident from the very act of rendering worship. I see not how men can be supposed to pray to any being, of whose favour they could not entertain either belief, or hope. But all favour from God to guilty beings must be merciful. In worshipping him, therefore, they have, I think, plainly expressed their hope, at least, that he would regard them with mercy, in some indefinite degree: and this hope they have probably derived from one, or other, of these considerations.

But whether the Mercy of God will extend to the final forgiveness of sin, and the communication of future happiness to man; or, if this were to be granted, upon what terms these blessings will be communicated; cannot be determined by Reason, from any considerations within its power. What conduct is proper for the infi-

nite Mind to pursue towards such rebellious and guilty creatures, as we are; and whether that conduct shall include any future favour to us; can never be decided by the human understanding. *Socrates* doubted whether it were possible for God to forgive sin; and, in my view, expressed the real ultimatum of Reason on this subject. The sins of men are so causeless, so numerous, and so great, as to leave to a sober man, solemnly considering this subject, little else beside *a fearful looking for of judgment.* To relieve the distress and despondency, to which we are thus exposed, the Bible comes to our aid; and holds out to our view the most unequivocal proofs, not only of the existence, but also of the extent, of this divine attribute. These are found,

1st. *In the numerous Declarations, which assert this character of God.*

These declarations are found every where; and are so familiarly known, that they need not now be repeated. They are also given to us in every form, in the most forcible language, and with the strongest images; and defy all doubt, as well as all denial, concerning this subject. The text is as direct and ample a declaration of this character of God, as can be desired, or formed; and the context as beautiful and forcible an illustration.

2dly. *In the precepts of the Bible.*

These require men to exercise mercy to each other; and assure them of peculiar divine approbation, and an eminently glorious reward, for the performance of this duty. At the same time, they threaten the most awful penalties, final condemnation and absolute rejection, to all the unmerciful. Nay, they forbid us to hope, and even to ask, for the forgiveness of our sins, unless we heartily forgive the trespasses of our fellow-men. The *merciful* only are entitled by the Scriptures to the *attainment* of *mercy;* while those of a contrary character are uniformly threatened with a terrible retribution.

This species of proof is exhibited with the strongest possible force in the account, given us by Christ, of the last judgment. In this account, recorded in the twenty-fifth chapter of *Matthew*, our Saviour mentions no other ground of the final acceptance of mankind, but the exercise of mercy towards their fellow-men; and no other ground of their final rejection, but their destitution of this attribute and its exercises. We know, indeed, from numerous declarations, made by himself, that mercy is not the only thing, required of men by the will of God; nor the only thing, regarded by the Judge in the acceptance, or rejection, of men at the great day. But we are clearly taught in this account, that mercy holds the foremost place in human excellence, and in the divine estimation; and that the contrary character is the most odious depravity, and pre-eminently the object of the divine abhorrence.

3dly. *In Testimonies of the divine Approbation, given to such, as have exercised this disposition; and of the divine disapprobation of such, as have exhibited the contrary character.*

In the instances of *Rahab*, *Ruth*, *Boaz*, *David towards Saul and his house*, *Obadiah towards the prophets of God*, *Ebed-melech the Ethiopian* (or *Cushite*) *towards Jeremiah*, &c. God was pleased to give direct and important testimonies of his favour and approbation in blessing those, who had showed mercy to their fellow-men. On the other hand, he manifested in the most awful manner his displeasure against *Saul* and his house, for his cruelty towards the *Gibeonites;* against *Ahab*, *Jezebel*, *Athaliah*, *Pashur*, *Herod*, and many others, for their cruelty. These are all direct proofs, that mercy is highly acceptable to God; and that *the implacable and unmerciful* are an abomination in his sight.

4thly. *In requiring all our homage and obedience to himself, as a merciful God.*

On this argument, although unanswerable in its import, I shall not insist, because it will be easily understood from the application, already made of it, to the moral attributes of God, considered in former discourses.

5thly. *In the mediation of Christ.*

Christ is, to us, the channel, through which the divine mercy flows; and his mediation the procuring cause, for which it is exercised towards mankind. All the preceding arguments, therefore, so far as they are furnished by the Scriptures, have a reference to him, and are supremely illustrated by his mediation. This great subject claims, of course, a distinct consideration, more extended, and more particular, than the present occasion will permit. Such a minute examination will, however, be the less necessary at the present time, because the subject will recur in many forms during the progress of these discourses, and because it is the commanding theme in every desk, and the principal subject of information to every religious audience. I shall now briefly consider the mercy of God, as illustrated by the

Incarnation,

Life, and

Death, of the Redeemer.

At this time the divinity of Christ will not be at all insisted on; as it will be, of course, the subject of a future investigation. It is sufficient for my purpose, that he was, what he cannot with decency be denied to be, *the beloved Son of God, in whom he is ever well pleased; the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person; as much better than the angels, as he has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they; the first born of every creature;* and *the glory of God* in the heavens, as well as in the earth.

When this great and wonderful person, great and wonderful beyond any possible estimation of such minds as ours, became *incarnate; he, who was rich* in the best of all possessions, the unqualified love of his Father, *for our sakes became poor, that we through him might become rich.* He allied himself, in a manner intimate, eternal, and inseparable, to *flesh and blood*, to sinners and worms

of the dust; and was not unwilling, nor *ashamed, to call them his brethren.* The strength and intenseness of the purpose for which he interfered, the greatness of his tenderness and compassion for mankind, are exhibited, with the utmost possible force, in the greatness of the condescension and humiliation, which he thus voluntarily assumed. It ought here to be remembered, that he not only *became man*, but man in the humblest circumstances; was the son of a poor virgin, married to a poor man; and was born in a stable, wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger.

In the *life* of the Son of God, the same character was exhibited in a great variety of forms. Throughout almost all his residence in the world, that is, during his minority, and about twelve years afterward, this glorious Person was entirely subjected to the commands and government of his humble parents; and wrought patiently in the business of a carpenter, laboriously earning *his* own *bread*, and theirs, by *the sweat of his brow.* After he began his public ministry, *he went about doing good*, particularly to those who were sick, blind, deaf, dumb, halt, maimed, and possessed of devils. To the poor, to publicans, and to sinners, he also preached the Gospel; and with supreme patience, labour, and benignity, invited them to eternal life. *Samaritans*, hated by the *Jews* beyond example, he brought into the divine kingdom; and, after warning, instructing, and exhorting *Jerusalem*, to the last limits of hope, *he wept* with the deepest compassion over its unbelief and ruin.

In his *death*, the same glorious attribute was still more wonderfully manifested. His death, like his incarnation and life, was wholly voluntary: for he, who drove the money-changers and their companions out of the temple; at whose presence the guards fell backward to the ground; whose voice, diseases, demons, and elements obeyed; and who re-summoned life to the breathless corpses of others; could undoubtedly have prolonged his own life, prevented every assault upon his person, and forbidden by his power the approach of danger and harm. Accordingly, he informs us, that *he laid down his life for his sheep, and that no man took it from him, but that he laid it down of himself.*

At the same time, his death was the most humiliating, which can be conceived, or suffered. It was the death of a malefactor, and that of the most scandalous kind; a death, also, pronounced by the voice of God to be accursed; and preceded and attended by every circumstance of contempt, abuse, and shame, which a furious rabble, and their more malignant masters, could devise, or inflict. Nor was it less distressing than humiliating. The clear foresight of it, *in the garden of Gethsemane*, threw even him, with all his lion-like fortitude, into *an agony;* and forced *sweat* from his body in the form of *great drops of blood.* The sufferance of it on the cross extorted from him that bitter cry, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* It is, however, to be remembered, that *he made his soul an offering for sin*, and that, in his soul, his peculiar dis-

tresses were chiefly suffered. This death, together with all the anguish which it involved, he perfectly foresaw, and predicted; and in the full sight of this anguish devoted himself to the suffering. In the midst of his agonies, also, he prayed for the forgiveness of his murderers; and with such efficacy, that within fifty days from his crucifixion, several thousands of them believed on his name, through the preaching of *St. Peter;* and are now in the heaven of heavens, celebrating with songs of transport the divine compassion of their Redeemer.

The incarnation, life, and death, of Christ, were undertaken, and accomplished, by him, with a complete knowledge, not only of the distresses, which he was to undergo, but also of the character of those, for whom they were to be undergone. He knew perfectly, that they were sinners, rebels, and apostates, condemned and ruined; utterly indisposed to believe his testimony, to accept his person, or to become interested in his mediation. He perfectly knew, that to make them even reconciled to him, or grateful for the immense benefits which he proffered, it would be necessary, after all he had done, to send the SPIRIT OF GRACE into the world, to give them a new heart, and a better mind. Of course, he engaged in this wonderful employment from compassion only, to the miserable beings whom he came to redeem. As his own character and conduct are, therefore, the strongest possible exhibition of mercy; so God, who gave him up to all these sufferings for this end, and to whom he was plainly the dearest object in the Universe, has in this transaction equally exhibited mercy as his own character.

From these summary considerations on this subject, I remark,

1st. *The Glory of this divine attribute.*

No moral characteristic has ever been esteemed so lovely as this, or so honourable to an Intelligent being. To love virtue, and the virtuous, is undoubtedly excellent and commendable; and includes all which we intend by justice, candour, or complacency, as exercised towards the character of others. In those, who exercise this disposition, it is both honourable and lovely; and to those, who are thus loved, it is an eminent ingredient of happiness.

To love those, whose character has not been exhibited to us, as either virtuous or sinful; to love, for example, absolute strangers, merely because they are rational beings; seems plainly to be a still higher exercise of a virtuous and amiable character. But to love those, who are known to be enemies to *us*, as well as vile and hateful in *themselves;* and to endeavour, with peculiar self-denial, or with great efforts, to render them virtuous and happy; is a still nobler exercise of goodness, than either of the former. This, as mankind in the calm exercise of Reason have ever determined, and as the Scriptures have abundantly declared, is the crown, the splendour, the glory, of moral excellence.

In considering this subject, it is difficult to refrain from calling

to mind the views of it, which angels have formed, and expressed. At the birth of the Redeemer, these exalted and benevolent beings left their happy residence, and directed their flight immediately to this sinful world. Here, for four thousand years, they had in the course of their ministry witnessed little else in the conduct of men, beside rebellion against God, injustice to each other, and the debasement of themselves. Still, with a divine sympathy, they rejoiced in the prospect of seeing the guilty mind renewed, the impious and deformed life purified from its stains, and the salvation of the ruined children of *Adam* certainly accomplished. Eagerly they hastened to proclaim *the glad tidings of great joy*, that *a Saviour was born unto men in the city of David.* One soul animated them all; and with one voice, inspired by the same exalted benevolence, they sung, *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace; Good-will towards men.*

How different have been the feelings of mankind, for whom this Mediation has been accomplished! Mankind, when Christ appeared in the world, rejected, persecuted, and slew him. From that day to the present, they have discovered the same disposition, with evidence which cannot be questioned, in their unbelief and rejection of the Redeemer. *We*, as well as others, possess and prove this character. Were Christ now to be born, there is but too much reason to fear, that we like the *Jews*, should leave him in a stable, consign him to a manger, persecute him through life, and compel him to a violent death. The *Jews* began their warfare against him with disbelieving and rejecting him; and ended with his crucifixion. Our disbelief and rejection of Christ are but too fearful indications, that, were our circumstances the same with theirs, we should unite with them in nailing Him to the cross. In the single act of refusing to commemorate his death, how many, here present, declare, that even in their own view they are not his friends. Let every such person remember the declaration of Christ himself, that *he who is not for him is against him.*

Let us all remember also, that *Christ was* infinitely *rich*, in all good, before *he became poor for our sakes.* Of course, he needed not us, nor any thing which is ours. With infinite ease, and by the mere exercise of his will, he could have blotted us out of being, and then have raised up millions of virtuous, obedient and glorious creatures; all of whom would, throughout eternity, have employed themselves in his service with unchanging faithfulness and joy. Whence then, and let Reason answer the question, did he choose to become Man; to suffer, and to die, for the lost race of Adam; for you, and for me? The only answer he himself has long since given: *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.* God was so benevolent, so disposed to show kindness, so full of long suffering and tender mercy, that even this exertion was not too great for him to make.

2dly. *From these considerations we also learn the absolute necessity of divine Revelation to mankind.*

On the question, *Whether God will forgive sin, and accept sinners*, evidently depends every hope of happiness beyond the grave. The question is, therefore, infinitely important to us; and needs, in the highest degree, to be satisfactorily answered. The doctrine, *that God is merciful*, is, I think, in the view of Reason, sufficiently probable to command our faith. But that it is, or can be proper for God to forgive sin in any case, Reason is utterly unable to evince. In what manner this conduct on the part of God would affect the government, and welfare, of the Universe, man, without Revelation, is utterly unable to determine. It is one thing to discern, that God is merciful; and wholly another, to know the objects, to which the divine mercy can with propriety be extended, or the cases, in which it can with propriety interfere.

If Reason can know, that God will forgive the sins of men, it must derive this knowledge either,

1st. *From the nature of this attribute;* or

2dly. *From the fact, that he has, in some one instance at least, forgiven sin;* or

3dly. *From some declaration, that he will forgive it;* or

4thly. *From some argument founded on analogy.*

From the *nature of the Divine Mercy*, we cannot conclude, that God can, or will, forgive the sins of Mankind. Whatever is best, and on the whole, most proper to be done, we are warranted to conclude he will certainly do; but what this is can never be determined by our minds. Two things place this assertion beyond debate. The one is *the extent of the divine kingdom*, and of all its immense and eternal concerns, which must of course demand far other measures, than such, as we are able to comprehend, or devise: the other is, *that God, in fact, does innumerable things, utterly contrary to all that we should expect, and wholly removed beyond the limits of our understanding.* These furnish the most ample proofs, that he will do innumerable other things, equally contrary to our expectation, and decision; and, of course, that we cannot pre-determine what he will do.

Revelation apart, we know no *instance in which he has forgiven*, and possess no *declaration, that he will forgive*, the sins of Men.

Equally destitute are we of any *analogy*, from which this conclusion can be rationally derived. The only ground even of hope, furnished by his Providence, is the patience with which he endures, and the blessings with which he surrounds us, notwithstanding our provocations. But this conduct seems to be connected by necessity with a state of trial; and furnishes no solid argument of a future and favourable reward. The gloomy and distressing circumstances, which attend our removal from this World by death, exhibit, on the contrary, awful premonitions of an unhappy allotment to us beyond the grave.

Independently of Revelation, Man is left to the sentence of mere justice and rigid laws. By these he is of course condemned. He is in fact a sinner; and must therefore be pronounced guilty, in the day of trial. In this situation, Reason finds, and leaves him; and to this situation, Infidelity conducts him again. Without the mediation of Christ, there is no escape from the sentence of the divine law; and Revelation itself furnishes no other way in which mercy can be extended to sinning man.

According to the most comfortable scheme of Infidelity, you must go to the Judgment on the footing of your own righteousness; and be tried by your own obedience. If you have faithfully obeyed God, you will be acquitted; if not, you must be condemned. If, then, Justification, acceptance, and future happiness; if deliverance from wrath, and escape from ruin, are necessary to you; the Mediation of Christ, and the Revelation which alone brings this mediation to your knowledge, or furnishes you with a hope of sharing in its blessings, are equally necessary.

3dly. *These considerations strongly enforce the guilt and danger of Cruelty.*

A merciful God, who esteems this attribute as the glory and consummation of his own excellence, cannot fail to detest supremely the opposite character, wherever it is found. These are the two extremes of *the moral Nature:* the former supremely lovely; the latter supremely hateful. Thus God has declared in the Scriptures; and thus mankind have also testified in all ages and nations. The awful parable of *the servant who owed ten thousand talents*, brings this subject home to the heart with the greatest force, of which language is capable. His debt to his Lord, great as it was, was freely forgiven. But, for his cruelty to his fellow-servant, he was *thrust into prison*, and *delivered over to the tormentors, until he should pay* the ten thousand talents, which he owed. In what an affecting manner does this story exhibit the indignation of God against unkindness and oppression? How plainly does he here teach us, that this sin is pre-eminently provoking in his sight, and beyond most, if not all, others, the cause of absolute rejection and endless suffering. Let every cruel, every unfeeling, man tremble at this terrible exhibition of the views, entertained by a merciful God concerning his odious and detestable character.

4th. *These considerations furnish the strongest inducements to the exercise of Mercy.*

In the great kingdom of Providence, how many blessings are continually provided by the hand of God for the evil and unthankful race of *Adam!* In spite of all their innumerable provocations; in spite of their impiety, idolatry, lewdness, falsehood, oppressions, wars and devastations; notwithstanding this great world has been from the beginning a temple of idols, a house of pollution, and a field of blood; the sun continually arises; the rain descends; the fields blossom; the harvests ripen: the *seasons* are *fruitful;* and

the *hearts* of men are *filled with food and gladness.* In the divine precepts, the same glorious disposition reigns; and mankind are required, with infinite obligation, to imitate and assume this exalted character; *to be merciful as their Father who is in heaven is merciful.* In the promises of the Gospel, we are allured to this most amiable of all conduct by the reward of immortal life and glory; and hear God himself declaring, *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.*

In the threatenings, we are deterred from the contrary conduct by the fearful denunciation of eternal wo.

In the Mediation of our Redeemer, we are presented with a perfect example of the nature and effects, of this most lovely attribute; furnished by a life, of which this attribute was the soul and spirit; a life pure and excellent beyond all precedent, and all praise; and closed by a death full of shame and agony, voluntarily undergone from mere compassion to this perishing world, and beautified and adorned with this consummation of benevolence in its most divine form. In this *we* indeed *behold the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.* Here we are *drawn with cords of love*, that *we* may *run after him.*

With these motives, with this example, before us, can we fail to *forgive men their trespasses against us*, and *be kind to the evil and unthankful?* Can we fail to *deal our bread to the hungry*, and *to bring the poor, that are cast out, into our houses? When we see the naked*, must we not be willing to *cover him:* must we not be unable to *hide ourselves from our own flesh?*

When this importunate and seductive world intrudes itself into the mind, and is insidiously busy in establishing its ascendency over the heart; when wealth is riveting its chains to fasten us in bondage; when ambition invites us to *the high places* of power and distinction, and promises, that we shall *be as Gods* in grandeur and glory; when pleasure informs us, that we have *much goods laid up for many years*, and bids us *take our ease, eat, drink and be merry;* in a word, when a temptation, sense, and sin, crowd around us, and prepare us to absorb all our affections in selfish gratification; let us look to the table of Christ, and remember, and behold, there, what he has done for us. If we are not hardened indeed; if we are not literally *dead in trespasses and sins;* we shall find it difficult, and I hope impossible, not to *go, and* in some measure *do likewise.* We shall, like him, *love our enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again:* we shall *bless them that curse us, and pray for them who despitefully use us and persecute us. Then shall we indeed be the children of our Father who is in heaven, who maketh his Sun to arise on the evil, as well as on the good. Then shall our light break forth as the morning, and our health spring forth speedily: our righteousness shall go before us, and the glory of the Lord shall be our rereward.*

SERMON XIII.

THE WISDOM OF GOD.

1 Tim. i. 17.—*Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour, and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*

IN this passage of Scripture, glory and honour are ascribed to God, in the character of the *eternal, immortal, and invisible Ruler* of all things, and also in that of *God the only wise;* with a solemn Amen subjoined to the ascription. When *God* is called *the only Wise*, it is not intended, that there is no other wisdom, beside that which is inherent in him; but that he is the source of all Wisdom, and wise to such a degree, as to render all other wisdom nothing in comparison with his. The *Wisdom of God is, in other words, infinite;* and shall now be the subject of our consideration.

The word *Wisdom*, is applied indifferently to the *character*, and to the *conduct*, of an Intelligent being. As applied to the latter, it denotes *the choice of good ends, and the selection and adoption of good means for the accomplishment of them.* As applied to the former, it denotes *that Attribute, which thus chooses, selects and adopts.*

Wisdom is, therefore, *a compound attribute;* being made up of *the knowledge to discern*, and *the disposition to choose, the ends and means*, which I have mentioned. The *Wisdom of God* is formed, therefore, of his *Omniscience and Benevolence, united in planning, and accomplishing, all real good*, in the progress of his immense and eternal kingdom.

It will not unnaturally be supposed, that, as the Omniscience and Benevolence of God have already been separately discussed, an examination of them, when combined in the attribute of wisdom, must be superfluous. I have at times adopted this opinion; but upon considering the propensity of our minds to dwell on these attributes, in this combination; a propensity encouraged abundantly by the Scriptures; and the frequency, with which the divine wisdom recurs, in forms very various and interesting, both in the conversation and writings of men, and the word of God, I have concluded, that a particular discussion of this subject would, if properly conducted, hold a useful place in this system of discourses.

After the arguments, adduced to prove the existence of these attributes, separately considered, it must, I presume, be unnecessary to allege any proofs of their existence in this combination. This discourse will, therefore, be employed only *in illustrating this dignified subject*, as it is exhibited in the various conduct of the Most High. From this vast field, also, *a few examples only* will be select-

ed; it being neither necessary, nor possible, on this occasion, to extend such an investigation to any great length. The scheme of discourse, which I propose to pursue, is to mention,

1st. *Summarily, such exemplifications of the divine wisdom, as are commonly insisted on;* and

2dly. *More particularly, some others, which have been less the objects of public attention; or which, at least, I have seen either very little, or not at all, discussed by others.*

1st. *I shall mention summarily such exemplifications of the divine wisdom, as are commonly insisted on.*

Among the numerous subjects, included under this head, *the heavens* by their magnificence undoubtedly strike the eye with the greatest force and splendour. In all ages, contemplative men have regarded the illustrious objects, presented to us in this great field of observation, as eminently indicating the wisdom of God. *O give thanks*, says the *Psalmist, unto Him, who alone doeth great wonders; who by wisdom made the heavens; who made great lights; the Sun to rule by day*, and *the moon and stars to rule by night; for his mercy endureth for ever. The Lord by wisdom*, saith *Solomon, hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens. When he prepared the heavens*, says *Wisdom itself*, speaking by the Voice of the same writer, *I was there; when he set a compass on the face of the deep.*

To us, whose views are enlarged, and rectified, by the modern astronomy, this subject is presented with an importance, which it could not have assumed in the mind of the ancients. To them, the size, proportions, distances, and uses, of the heavenly bodies were in a great measure unknown; and, where this was not the fact, were so partially known, as to leave the mind in many respects perplexed and lost. With our superior advantages, we discern the Sun to be a vast, luminous world, astonishingly greater than all the others united, which compose the solar system. All these we behold arranged around this glorious world as their common centre. To them the Sun communicates motion, light, regularity, and harmony; and to their inhabitants, life, and the means of sustaining it; food, raiment, warmth, and activity; and their consequences, usefulness, and enjoyment. This amazing scene of wonders, we have the most satisfactory reason to believe, is in a sense endlessly repeated in the stellary systems, diffused throughout the boundless expansion; and repeated with a similar display of divine wisdom in their regularity, harmony, and beauty. Even an Atheist must be compelled to confess, that in this scene there is a perfect and glorious accomplishment of just such things, as, in the view of the human mind, appear to be suited to the most perfect operations of the most perfect wisdom.

In *the revolution of the Seasons*, intimately connected with this subject, we behold an inferior, but still a splendid, display of the same magnificence; and an exhibition, not less affecting, of the

same glorious attribute. From the present position of the earth, are derived, in the different parts of its annual circuit, Summer and Winter, Seed-time and Harvest. It cannot be necessary for me to attempt a detail of the various methods, in which the divine Hand provides, through the instrumentality of the seasons, for the supply of our wants, the relief of our distresses, and the uninterrupted succession of our enjoyments. A child needs not to be informed, that *all creatures wait upon God, that he may give them their meat in due season;* and that *he opens his hand, and satisfies the wants of every living thing.*

Nearly allied to the revolution of the Seasons, is *that, by which the world enjoys the vicissitude of day and night.* The diurnal rotation of the earth, connected with the position of its axis, furnishes to all its parts an equal enjoyment of these two great affections of our globe; just as its annual revolution, connected with the same position, distributes the seasons, alternately, in a regular succession, over all the regions from the equator to the poles. By the day, man is enabled to pursue successfully all the business of life; and by the night is, at the necessary and most proper intervals, furnished with seasons of refreshment and rest. It ought to be remarked, that by means of the refrangibility of light, and the refractive power of the atmosphere, a portion of day is added to us every morning and every evening; and the light of the Sun conveyed to us, and withdrawn from us, in that gradual manner, which, while it is eminently beautiful and delightful, is at the same time the only manner, in which it could be comfortable, or perhaps tolerable, to our eyes.

A philosopher has made it an argument of the wisdom of God, and in my view justly, *that the earth is clothed in green;* a colour eminently easy, refreshing, and delightful to the eye.

In the provision made for the wants of men and animals, there are innumerable, as well as wonderful proofs of the Wisdom of God. The means, by which an ample supply for all these wants is continually furnished, were they not the objects of our daily inspection, and thus rendered so familiar, as to be in a great measure unregarded, would awaken in our minds, not approbation merely, but amazement. *A single plant produces yearly a great number of seeds;* so many as to furnish, in the ordinary course of providence, abundant assurance, that that kind of plant shall be continued throughout the successive ages of the world. As a further security, *these seeds are*, to a great extent at least, and in all probability universally, *incorruptible, when lodged below the depth, within which vegetation springs;* notwithstanding they are so easily dissoluble above that limit. By the latter circumstance, an easy, certain, and abundant vegetation is secured: by the former, seeds are treasured in the earth for long periods of time; whence by deep ploughing, digging, and other means, they are brought again within the region of vegetation, and spring in the same manner, as fresh seeds. I have been satisfactorily informed of the vegetation of seeds, which

had in this manner been certainly kept in the earth no less than two hundred years. *The diffusion of these seeds over the face of the earth* is accomplished by means, which are perhaps still more wonderful. Such seeds as are heavy, and immoveable by more obvious means; such, for instance, as the stones and seeds of fruits; are commonly swallowed both by birds and beasts, and conveyed in their stomachs whithersoever they rove; and are ultimately planted, not only in the neighbouring fields, and countries, but also in more distant regions. Others, of considerable weight, are lodged permanently in a large and light husk; which, together with the seed contained in it, is easily separated, after the seed has become ripe, and blown by the wind over extensive tracts. Others, still, are winged, and feathered, in such a manner, as to be easily wafted in the breeze, and spread through all the surrounding country. A young gentleman, once in my presence examining a seed of a particular kind of grass, and finding a beautiful feather thus adhering to it, was so struck with this contrivance for the dispersion of such seeds over the earth, that he exclaimed, "The man must be a brute, who does not believe in the existence of God."

The *most necessary and useful things are also*, with the most perfect wisdom, *generally diffused;* while those which are less interesting to human happiness, are more rare and solitary. Food, raiment, drink, and fuel, are spread every where. Gold and gems, wines and spices, are found only in particular places. Wheat and grass, the most useful of all vegetables, grow in more soils and climates than any other. Water and air exist throughout the world; and are placed beyond the control of man. Could any one of our race command either of these elements, he would possess an absolute dominion over every inhabitant of those regions, to which this command extended. Animals, useful for food, or other important purposes of man, are multiplied easily to any extent. Fish, which furnish so considerable a part of human sustenance, multiply, in a sense, endlessly. Other animals, of inferior use, are by various causes limited to a very moderate increase. The clothing of animals changes with the change of climate. When removed to a cold latitude, it becomes thick, soft, and warm; when to a hot latitude, it becomes thin, coarse, and cool. Without these changes, the animals thus removed would be unable to live.

Both *the body and mind of man* are astonishing exhibitions of wisdom, and that in ten thousand different ways. As I have dwelt on this subject, for a purpose somewhat different, in a former discourse; and as it is so often insisted on by others; I shall dismiss it with only two or three observations. The eye, says *Nicholson*, were all other arguments for the existence of God unknown, or lost, would remain an unanswerable proof of the wisdom of God. The self-restoring power of our bodies, when diseased, or wounded, is among the most extraordinary evidences of this attribute.

2dly. *I shall now mention some other exhibitions of the Wisdom of God, less frequently insisted on than those already specified.*

A wonderful exhibition of this nature is found, in the first place, *in the accomplishment of many ends by few and simple means*. The *great principle of gravitation*, for example, unites and holds together the corpuscles, which constitute worlds; combines in one vast union the worlds which compose a system; generates the motions of the planets, and comets, round the Sun, and of their satellites round the planets; and governs, universally, their regularity and harmony; levels the surface of the ocean, and prevents it from overflowing the land; produces, as one cause at least, the ascent of vapour, and the descent of rain; gives birth to the continuance of all bodies on the surface of the earth; regulates the motions of animals, and of mankind, together with all mechanical powers and operations; and thus extends a governing, necessary, and most useful influence over all worlds, and all their inhabitants. The mean here is one; the ends are innumerable: and the influence of the mean is every where necessary, and all that is necessary.

Water in the ocean, is the great storehouse of vapour. Hence are formed mists and clouds; which, beside presenting the eye with innumerable, ever-varying, and delightful prospects; sheltering, in intense heats, the bodies of men and animals from the blaze of the Sun; pointing out various approaching changes of weather; and thus warning mankind both on the land, and on the sea, of approaching danger, or announcing the arrival of safety; become the sources of rain, dews, hail, and snow, and the origin of fountains, brooks, lakes, and rivers. By these, the earth is watered, enriched, and beautified; and man supplied with food and drink, with raiment and fuel. By these, also, all animals are supplied with sustenance and enjoyment. Water, also, is not only the general nourishment, but the chief component part of all vegetables, and a principal one of all animal bodies. At the same time, it moves innumerable machines of different kinds, abridges in a wonderful degree the labour of man; and performs a vast variety of important purposes, which without it would be impossible. In the ocean it is, moreover, a menstruum, in which salt, being dissolved, is raised to the surface, and thereby crystalizing becomes a part of the food of men and animals, without which their sustenance would be uncomfortable and precarious, if not impossible. Water is also an indispensable material in a vast multitude of chymical, medical, economical, and other artificial processes; and has in this way wonderfully enlarged, and is still in this way daily enlarging, the comfort and the knowledge, of mankind. Finally, it is the basis of all navigation; and thus the chief medium of the commerce, and of the geographical and natural, as well as much other knowledge, possessed by men.

The same doctrine might be extensively illustrated by the almost innumerable purposes, of which fire, air, and light, are the means;

as well as by a great multitude of other subjects. Generally, it may be observed, that the few elements, to which all material substances have been already reduced, constitute all the bodies, and are the causes of all the immensely numerous operations, which exist in the material world; and, in their combination, and their efficacy, gloriously display the wisdom, and the goodness, of their Creator.

2dly. *The unceasing and universal Variety, introduced into the works of Creation and Providence, is a strong exemplification of the Wisdom of the Creator.*

The Creation of a single being, or the production of a single event, furnishes a complete exhibition of the ideas, existing in the creating Mind, of which either is a copy, and in conformity to which, each was brought into existence. A repetition of the same event, or the existence of a second being exactly resembling the first, would barely exhibit the same ideas a second time, and discover nothing new concerning the Creator. Hence, were two or more beings, or events, exactly like each other, to be brought into existence; none, except the first, would at all enlarge our conceptions of the Mind, by which they were effectuated. Every variety in beings, or events, is a new disclosure of the character, skill, and contrivance, of the Creator; and, where we understand the end for which it exists, of his goodness also. For this, as one great reason, God undoubtedly has formed, and conducted, all things on the plan of universal variety. No two beings, or events, appear precisely alike. The leaves of trees, the blades of grass, and the particles of sand, as well as other more important and more complicated objects, exhibit, even to the naked eye, an endless diversity. This characteristic extends through the mineral, vegetable, animal, and rational kingdoms, and throughout the whole progress of events.

In every one of the individuals, composing these, may be seen something, which is peculiar; and which, in a peculiar *manner*, unfolds the ideas, the contrivance, the wisdom, of the Infinite Mind. As the diversity is literally boundless, so we are presented by it with a picture of the endlessly diversified views and conceptions of Him, in whose mind all existed from the beginning.

By this scheme of things, a field is opened to Intelligent beings for learning and understanding this glorious part of the divine character. By the love of variety, and novelty, which he has implanted in the minds of rational creatures, he has with the same wisdom prompted them voluntarily to an unceasing, unwearied, and delightful study of his works; which are only displays of himself. Thus an effectual, and most wise, provision is made for our knowledge of the divine character; on which alone is ultimately founded our admiration, reverence, love, and obedience. A virtuous mind, surveying this wonderful subject, can scarcely fail to exclaim, *O Lord! how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all.*

Further: Variety is the foundation of all discernment and discrimination in rational beings; and this, again, is the directory of all our various conduct. For example, if the features of the human face, and the figure of the human person, were not perpetually various; we could not know one man from another, nor distinguish our parents, children, friends, neighbours, or enemies. The judge would not be able to discriminate between the criminal and his innocent neighbour, nor between the witness and a stranger. The parties would become twins. The right of the judge himself to sit upon the bench would be safely doubted, and denied; and the child of a beggar, or a foreigner, might successfully dispute the title to a throne with the lawful heir. Were the varieties even of the *human voice* to cease, a great part of the important concerns of mankind would be immediately so perplexed, and disturbed, as to be necessarily given up. Nor could any clue be found, to guide us out of the labyrinth, in which we should be lost. Nay, if the *handwriting of men* were to become uniform, there would be an end of all certainty in our correspondence; in our instruments of conveyance and obligation; in signatures of testimony, agency, and office: in public and private records; and, in a word, in every thing which was the work of the pen. From these few instances, we learn, what indeed might be illustrated by thousands of others, the supreme wisdom, with which this variety has been introduced into the creation of God.

3dly. *The divine Wisdom is eminently conspicuous in spreading over the Creation certain kinds, and degrees, of Resemblance and Uniformity.*

Under the last head I have observed, that all things differ from each other. It is still true, and a truth of immense importance, that there is an extensive series of resemblances, every where diffused, and not less wonderful than the variety, which I have specified. These resemblances are the foundation of what logicians term the genera and species, or the kinds and sorts, under which all the objects of our perception are arranged. Were there no such resemblance, there could be no such arrangement: and, were there no such arrangement, we should scarcely know any thing beyond the present object. Our knowledge is composed almost entirely of general truths; and every such truth is a proposition, declaring what is true concerning a vast number of individuals. One general truth, therefore, contains all the knowledge, which would be conveyed by a number of propositions, declaring the same thing, equal to the whole number of the individuals included. But, if we could not arrange individuals into such classes, or sorts, every proposition, which we formed, must be of the kind, which logicians call singular, or must respect one individual only; and nothing would be communicated, or learned, by means of it, but what respected merely that individual. Of course, every attribute of every other individual must still be learned anew. The

multitude of such propositions, which would be necessary to express what is now declared by one general truth, would in a short time overburden the memory, patience, and strength, of the mind; and fatigue it to listlessness and despair. Men would, in this case, always be children; necessarily ignorant of the nature, qualities, and uses, of almost every thing, with which they were concerned. But, if there were no such resemblance or uniformity; there could, as I have remarked, be no such arrangement made by the mind. The ideas of kinds and sorts would never be formed. No general propositions could be made; and no general truths exist: for, every such truth is merely a declaration concerning resemblance or uniformity. Of course, men, as to their knowledge, would be infants for ever.

As, therefore, by the *variety* found in all things, and the *differences* which they every where exhibit, God has opened his character boundlessly to our view, and prompted us to study it for ever; so by their *uniformity and resemblance* he has *enabled* us to know it; and prepared us for an everlasting progress in intellectual improvement. In both united, he has displayed consummate Wisdom.

4thly. *The Wisdom of God is strongly conspicuous in the communication of language to mankind.*

Language is the medium, by which we convey our thoughts to each other, and record them for personal, and common use. If we could not *convey our thoughts to each other;* they must of course be confined to our own bosoms; and each man would know nothing except what he gained from his own observation. His character and situation, in such a case, can be very imperfectly imagined by us. But it is perfectly clear, that he must be sunk far below the state of a savage; and dwindle into a character, incapable of existing, except in that rude wilderness, fancifully sytled a state of nature. Even the acquisitions, which he would make in this situation, he could not leave behind him; but, however inclined, must carry them with him to the grave. Every generation, if successive generations could exist, would begin exactly where their fathers began; and not an improvement would be made in the affairs of men. *Bacon and Newton, Locke and Berkely, Addison and Johnson,* would then be distinguished, if distinguished at all, as we now mark a shrewder ape, or a more sagacious dog.

By the communication of language to mankind, God has enabled us to unfold to each other all our thoughts, emotions, and designs; to treasure up what we know for the benefit of our posterity; to diffuse the knowledge of common danger and suffering, of common safety and happiness; to spread the same sentiments and improvements, over a country, a continent, or a world; to embark in a single, useful, and great design, all whose labours are necessary to the accomplishment; to publish systems of laws for the preservation of the common rights, and the effectuation of the common duties;

to unite nations in the great purposes of internal and external defence; to control the vast concerns of empires; to preserve, and enlarge, the science of preceding ages; to spread the Gospel of salvation through the habitable world; to advance knowledge and virtue on this earth towards the Millennial standard; and to prepare endless multitudes of mankind for immortal happiness and glory. In the promotion of these mighty purposes, language is a principal and indispensable ingredient. How strong an impression does it bear of the wisdom of God!

By the contrivance of the same wisdom, which communicated it, is language so formed, *as to be easily learned in very early childhood:* the period, in which necessity most demands, that it should be learned. Nay, it is obviously acquired at this period with far less difficulty, than at a more advanced age. At the same time, the great body of words is so formed, that they possess an appellative, or common nature; so as to denote the kinds and sorts of things above mentioned, and to include all individual beings and events, comprised by a sort or kind, under one common name. Thus the noun, *Man*, denotes all men; the adjective, *Good*, denotes that which is good in every instance; the participle, *Loving*, signifies the exercise of that affection in every case; the verb, *Hate*, includes all exertions of hatred; and the adverb, *Swiftly*, indicates a rapid progress wherever it exists. Hence, as in the former case we are enabled to conceive clearly of things, so by the correspondence of language with our conceptions, we are enabled to speak of them clearly. A few words in this manner are sufficient to express an immense multitude of beings and events, without any perplexity or confusion. Were this not the structure of language; words must be multiplied to such a degree, for the purposes of communication even to a moderate extent, as to render it impossible, that they should be either learned or remembered. Nothing, but the familiarity of this object, can prevent us from admiring the wonderful wisdom, which it displays.

5thly. *The wisdom of God is gloriously seen in constituting one great class of his creatures Moral Agents.*

By the term, *Moral Agent*, I wish it to be understood, that I intend *a real agent, a being whose thoughts, affections, and actions, are his own.* Of such agents the divine kingdom is eminently composed.

By forming such agents in innumerable multitudes, God has made beings, capable, with intelligence and choice, of coinciding, and co-operating with him, in his own infinitely desirable and excellent purposes. They, with a distant, but real, resemblance to himself, can know, love, hate, choose, reject, design, and act; and all this, to great and good ends. Particularly, they are capable of understanding, in some good degree, his character, designs, dispensations, law, and government; and the glory and excellence discovered in them all. These also, and Him as the Author of them,

they are capable of regarding with wonder, veneration, and love. Him they are capable of worshipping, and obeying. To each other, at the same time, they are able to extend every useful thought, every amiable affection, and every beneficent action; and can thus become the means of mutual improvement, worth, and happiness. In forming these beings, the Wisdom of God is in many respects gloriously manifested. Particularly, as they are capable of being the subjects of real, though finite benevolence, and of directing this disposition by their understanding to an unceasing variety of desirable and useful purposes; as they are capable of promoting their own excellence and enjoyment, and that of each other; as they are capable of knowing, loving, and glorifying him, and of possessing the exalted worth, and expansive happiness, which result from all these as causes; and as immense multitudes of them actually do all the things, which I have mentioned: so they can become, and do in fact become, delightful objects both of the benevolence and complacency of God. All these things, also, they can, and will, do in a never-ceasing progress throughout eternity. In forming such agents, therefore, God has made for himself a kingdom supremely glorious and divine; composed of subjects, whom his eye regards with infinite complacency; to whom his hand is stretched out with eternal bounty; who, as a vast mirror, reflect, as the ocean reflects the splendour of the Sun, the boundless beauty and glory of their Creator; and whom his voice with awful but delightful accents pronounces to be a work worthy of JEHOVAH.

My audience will undoubtedly observe, that there are two great manifestations of divine Wisdom, which have usually been alleged by preachers, but which have been omitted in this discussion; *the Redemption of mankind*, and *the Word of God*. These are, beyond a question, the prime exhibitions of this Attribute. The *Word of God* is called by itself the *Word of Wisdom;* the *Gospel* is justly declared to be *the wisdom of God*. By the same illustrious title, is *Christ* known in the Scriptures; and to disclose the *manifold Wisdom* of God in the most wonderful work of Redemption, is expressly asserted to be *the end*, for which *all things were created*. But there is not opportunity, at this time, to exhibit either of these subjects in such a light, as they both indispensably demand. On a future occasion, should Providence permit, I may consider them at large.

The illustrations, which have been produced in this discourse, although a very few, out of an endless multitude, actually and daily existing, are, it is presumed, amply sufficient to impress upon the mind a full conviction, an affecting sense, of the Wisdom of God.

REMARK.

A single remark, intended as a general comment on the several discourses concerning this most sublime and wonderful of all sub-

jects, the Existence, and Character of the Creator, shall conclude this Sermon.

When we call to mind even those views of this subject, which have been here succinctly and imperfectly given; we cannot, I think, fail to exclaim, *How great and glorious a being is God!*

I have now finished the observations, which I proposed to make on the existence and perfections of God; and considered this vast subject, as it is presented to us both by Reason and Revelation. What an amazing character is here manifested to our view! JEHOVAH, the self-existent, eternal, immutable, omnipresent, omniscient, almighty, and independent; the only good, just, faithful, true, merciful, and wise; the Maker, the Preserver, the Benefactor, and the Ruler, of all things: *to whom be glory for ever and ever.* What a Character, what a Being, is this! How do all creatures in his presence, and in comparison with his greatness and perfection, shrink into nothing, and become justly *counted to him, as less than nothing and vanity!* How truly, how suitably to his character, does he say, *I am; and there is none else!* How wonderful a Cause must He be, from whom all things are derived! How divine an Architect must He be, who with *his finger laid the foundation of the earth,* and *built his stories in the Heavens!* How amazing a Ruler, *who doth according to his will in the armies of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; whose hand none can stay; and to whom no being may say, What doest thou?* How exalted a Benefactor, *who giveth unto all, life and breath, and all things!* How perfect a God, who conducts his immense kingdom along the ages of eternity, with ever increasing glory, happiness, and perfection!

How infinitely different is the JEHOVAH of the Scriptures from the Gods of the Heathen, of Philosophy, and of Infidelity! How many weaknesses disgrace, how many passions pollute, how many vices deform, these objects of *man's device,* applause, and homage! All of *them are vanity and a lie; and they that make them are like unto them, and so is every one that putteth his trust in them. There is none of them, that considereth in his heart; in none of them is there knowledge or understanding. They feed on ashes; a deceived heart hath turned them aside, that they cannot deliver their souls, nor say, Is there not a lie in our right hands? Lift up your eyes on high, and behold, Who hath created these things? Who bringeth out their host by number? Who calleth them all by names? Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with a span? Who hath comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure; and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?*

But thou, *O Zion! that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice; and rejoice with joy and singing. Thou shalt see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of thy God. He shall come with a strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him. Behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him! He shall feed his flock like a shep-*

herd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom. For thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place; with him also, that is of a contrite and humble spirit; to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite. For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.

Seraphim and Cherubim, Thrones, Dominions, Principalities and Powers, feel no employment, no honour, no happiness, so great, as to worship, serve, and glorify, God for ever and ever. With wonder, awe, adoration, and transport, they surround his throne, *veil their faces, cast their crowns at his feet, and cease not day nor night, crying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, who wast, and who art, and who art to come.*

If men possessed the disposition of angels; their employments, their views, and their happiness, would in substance be the same. No Polytheists, no Atheists, no Infidels, would ever have disgraced the human name. To this end, no enlargement of our understanding is necessary. A mere change of disposition would convert this world into one great temple of Jehovah; in which *one faith* would command and control, and *one* worship ascend, *as the odour of sweet incense, from the rising of the Sun to the going down of the same. Holiness to the Lord would be written* on the hearts, the lips, the employments, and the pleasures, of the great family of *Adam*. Every heart would glow with love and rapture; and every hill and valley become vocal with praise. In all his wonderful works, God would be sought and seen, acknowledged, and glorified. Every being and event would be viewed only as a manifestation of God; and the universe contemplated as a vast picture, exhibiting, in forms and varieties innumerable, the wisdom and power, the benevolence and amiableness, the beauty and glory, of JEHOVAH.

SERMON XIV.

THE DECREES OF GOD.

Job xxiii. 13.—*But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and, what his soul desireth, even that he doeth.*

IN this passage of Scripture, *Job* asserts, that *the mind*, or will *of God, is one, and unchangeable, or incapable of being turned;* and *that all its dictates, or desires, are carried by him into execution.* As God does whatsoever he chooses; it is hardly necessary to observe, that he does nothing but what he chooses. As his mind is unchangeable, and but one; so, this being admitted, it is intuitively certain, that it has always been but one. As all things were originated, are preserved, directed, and controlled, by God; so it is plain, that they all come to pass exactly according to his pleasure. This doctrine is therefore clearly contained in the text:

That all things, both beings and events, exist in exact accordance with the purpose, pleasure, or what is commonly called The Decrees, of God.

Before I begin the direct discussion of this doctrine, I shall make a few preliminary observations.

It is well known to the Christian world at large, that no subject has been the foundation of more, or more strenuous, controversy, than this. By various classes of Christians, and some of them very numerous, it has been roundly, and steadily, denied in form. The things, which have been written concerning it with heat and obstinacy, would fill many volumes. It has been asserted to be injurious to the divine character, and destructive of all finite moral agency. Those, who have holden the doctrine, have been charged by their antagonists with denying the free agency of God himself; and with introducing into the Christian system the Stoical doctrine of Fate, and making an iron-handed Necessity, or blind Destiny, the ultimate and irresistible disposer of all things. At the same time, it has been alleged, that they shroud all human hopes in midnight darkness; and prevent, or destroy, every effort of man to become finally virtuous and happy.

Such things, as these, certainly prove, that there is, in the human mind, a strong bias against the doctrine. This appears often in the conduct of those, who believe it; many of whom seem desirous, that it should either rarely, or never, be brought into the desk. Multitudes appear utterly unwilling even to converse concerning it; and perhaps equal multitudes decline to make it a subject of contemplation.

It must be acknowledged, that this doctrine has been indiscreet-

ly handled, both in Sermons, and in other discourses. As many things, pertaining to it, are in their nature very abstruse; and many others lie without the reach of the human understanding; so it will be easily believed, that in the ardour of investigation, disputants will, of course, be in danger of asserting many things, which are neither satisfactorily evinced, maturely considered, nor well understood, by themselves; and extend their inquiries to many other things, about which inquisition is fruitless, because discovery is impracticable. *The bounds* of the human mind, as well as of the human race, *are fixed;* and beyond them it cannot pass. They are, however, distant enough from each other to leave a field of investigation so ample, as to allow of the utmost employment of the greatest talents. Every attempt to push our inquiries beyond them is unwise; both because it is vain, and because it is a waste of that time, which might be usefully employed on things within our reach.

But, if the doctrine, which I have stated, is true; if it is a doctrine revealed in the Scriptures; it cannot fail to be a proper subject of thought, of conversation, and of preaching: *for all Scripture is given by inspiration of God:* and *is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness.* Perhaps it is unnecessary, and would not be useful, to make it a subject of very frequent discussion in the pulpit. A considerable number of persons in every congregation must be regarded, as being imperfectly competent to judge advantageously of such a subject from such discussions. Such persons, to say the least, would fail of being instructed; and, if not instructed, would probably be bewildered. At the same time, though frequently asserted, it is very little discussed, in the Scriptures: and the Apostle *Paul*, alluding to it, breaks out into this exclamation: *O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!*

No occasion can be more proper for the introduction of this doctrine into the desk, than the present. I have just finished a series of Sermons on the *Being*, and *Perfections*, of God. His *decrees*, or *counsels*, are the next subject of inquiry in a system, professedly comprising all the important doctrines of Theology. That the doctrine concerning this subject, which is true, and scriptural, whatever it may be, is one, and a very important one, of such a system, will not be questioned either by those who believe, or those who disbelieve, the doctrine, advanced as the principal subject of the present discourse. The controversies about it, and the sentiments expressed by the several disputants, prove this point beyond any necessity of debate.

In considering this doctrine, I shall attempt,

I. *To explain it;*

II. *To prove it;* and

III. *To answer the Objections, commonly made against it.*

I. *I shall attempt to explain this doctrine.*

This is peculiarly necessary; because, if I mistake not, both its friends and enemies have perplexed it, not a little, by the manner, in which they have represented the doctrine, and each others' opinions.

It has been frequently said, *that the Decrees of God are the consequence of his knowledge, and that his foreknowledge is in consequence of his decrees:* and it is asked, *how it is possible, that God should foreknow the existence of any thing, until he has decreed, that it should exist.* This phraseology, if applied to men, or other finite beings, might be correct. Such beings usually consider; then determine; and then, so far as is applicable to their nature and circumstances, foresee, or foreknow, the event. But, when applied to God, it is necessarily erroneous. In the divine Mind, succession is impossible. There is not, there cannot be, one act, by which God knows any or all things; another following it, by which he determines their existence; and then another, by which he foreknows, that they will exist. Whatever exists in the divine Mind exists co-etaneously, and co-eternally, with all other things which exist in it. God, in this respect, is no more the subject of *variableness*, or *any shadow of turning*, than in other respects. Whatever is intended by knowledge, foreknowledge, or decrees, all is simultaneous or absolutely co-existent. St. Paul exhibits this subject in a happier manner. *Whom he foreknew*, says this Apostle, *he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.* By this declaration, we are not to understand, that the predestination, spoken of, followed the foreknowledge, any more than that the foreknowledge followed the predestination. The Apostle says, *Whom He foreknew*, not, *After He had foreknown them.*

Should it be said, that this phraseology is adopted merely in condescension to human infirmity; and that it is intended to express these things as they exist in the order of nature and not in the order of time: I answer, that the language is still dangerous, because it is incorrect in itself; and so liable to be misunderstood, that it leads both those who use it, and those to whom it is used, into very serious errors. The act, or *state*, of the divine Mind, which gave birth to the existence of all things, is one; and there never was a period in duration, not even an indivisible moment, in which it was not absolutely and inseparably one.

The decrees of God are often said to be general and special; the special decrees being those, which respect the acceptance, or rejection, of mankind; and the general decrees, those which respect other things. This language is, also, in my view erroneous; and leads those, who adopt it, into mischievous consequences. There is no metaphysical, or real, distinction in the nature of the several decrees of God. Nor are they distinguishable from each other, except either *numerically*, or *by means of the objects, which they respect.* Nor is there any more specialty pertaining to one of them than to another. God wills, or chooses, the existence, conversion,

or salvation, of a man, the fall of a sparrow, or the descent of rain, with a volition in every sense metaphysically, or in its own nature, the same. The strict truth is, that one, indivisible act, perhaps it might be as properly called *state*, of the Divine Mind, gave birth to the existence of all things.

The decrees of God are frequently styled eternal. They are truly eternal, in the same sense in which God is eternal: viz. they are eternally present, and incapable of being compared, metaphysically, with a successive state of being. In this sense they are always, like God himself, possessed of an existence eternally present; being no other than an unchangeable state of the divine mind.

Further, *the decrees of God are said to be sovereign.* In explaining this term, some persons speak of God, as willing, decreeing, &c., *because he wills, chooses, or pleases*, &c.: while others, on the contrary, suppose that the Decrees of God, in whatever sense understood, must, if they exist, be arbitrary, and therefore unreasonable; and hence they conclude, that there are no such decrees. Both, in my view, think, and speak, erroneously. To say, that God wills a thing, because he wills it, is to speak without meaning. It is impossible, that any thing should be the cause of itself; nor can *an act* be any more the cause of its own existence, than *a being*. This doctrine, it is to be observed, is equally true of the *final*, as of the *efficient* cause. Nothing can be the end, for which itself exists. The assertion is also injurious to God; because it exhibits him as choosing, or decreeing, without any reason and to no end. This conduct in men, if we suppose it possible, would be folly in the extreme: it can therefore never be imputable to *the only wise God.* The Decrees, and the conduct, of God, are sovereign, in the true and Scriptural sense; viz. *that he does according to his will, independently and irresistibly; and that he gives no account of any of his matters, any farther than he pleases.* Still it is equally true, that *he wills nothing without the best reason;* whether the reason be disclosed to his creatures, or not. Real glory to himself, and real good to his creation, not otherwise attainable, furnish the Reason of the divine choice, whether it respects the existence or motions of an insect, or the conversation and salvation of a man. The kind, the degree, the manner, and many other things, are either wholly, or partially, unknown to us: but the good is always in view, and always the reason of the divine determination.

It is observable, that the Scriptures rarely speak of this subject, under the name *Decree.* This word, and others derived from it, are used in the Old Testament *twelve times with a reference to God.* In each of these instances, a *particular determination, or sentence, concerning a particular thing*, is spoken of; and in no instance, that general determination, or system of determinations, usually denoted by this term in Theological discussions. In the New Testament,

the word, as referring to God, is not used at all. Whenever the subject of this doctrine is mentioned in the Scriptures, the words *counsel*, *purpose*, *choice*, *pleasure*, *will*, or some other equivalent words, are employed to express it. These words are, in my view, more adapted, in the exact metaphysical sense, to the subject, than the word *decrees;* and naturally lead the mind to more just conceptions of its nature. In accordance with this fact, I shall express my own views of it in this manner. *What is commonly intended by the Decrees of God, is that choice*, or pleasure, *of the divine Mind, eternally and unchangeably inherent in it, by which all things are brought into being.*

Having thus explained my views of the Doctrine, I shall now attempt,

II. *To prove it.*

Under this head, I shall

1st. *Allege several direct Arguments in support of the doctrine;* and

2dly. *Suggest several Difficulties, which result from denying it.*

1st. *I shall allege several direct arguments in support of the doctrine.*

It will be admitted by all persons, beside Atheists, that there was a time, when created, or finite, beings began to exist; and of course, that, antecedently to this time, there was nothing, except God. It will also be admitted, that God was the Cause of their existence; or that all originally derived their being from him in some manner or other. With these things in my view, I observe,

1. *That all things, both beings and events, were eternally and perfectly known to God.*

By this I intend alike all things *possible*, as well as *actual;* and *the nature, qualities, and operations, of all;* together with *all supposable connexions, dependencies, and relations.* I mean also, that these were seen with one single view, and *that* completely comprehensive and perfectly clear, by the divine Mind; so that nothing pertaining to them in any respect was, in any degree, unperceived in this perfect manner. This view I consider, also, as being absolutely one invariable, and eternal. It never began; it will never terminate. It never has been, it never will be, in the least degree changed. All this is involved in the Omniscience of God; and has, I flatter myself, been proved to be a part of the Divine Character.

2. *In the nature and operations of things there is, inherent, a foundation for preference, or choice.*

By this I intend, that some of the things, which were thus known by the Divine Mind, were better, or upon the whole more desirable; and that others were less desirable. This, I presume, cannot be denied. It will not be denied, that a multitude of those things which we can imagine, and which God, if he pleased, could create,

are much less desirable, and certainly so, even in the view of such minds as ours, than other things, which he has actually created. Beyond this, it will, I presume, be admitted without a question, that many things, which we can imagine, are absolutely undesirable; and that others, still, would, if brought into existence, be incalculably noxious to the universe. That an individual man, for example, should possess the strength of an elephant, the ferocity of a tiger, the sight and wings of an eagle, and the sagacity of a fiend; or that another individual should possess the power of controlling the elements, with the spirit, and invulnerability, of a fiend; would be things absolutely fatal to the inhabitants of this world. That the Apostles, when employed to publish the Gospel, and erect the Christian Church, should have possessed the fraudulent and impious spirit of *Voltaire*, would, as every sober man must necessarily see, have been a fact incalculably injurious to mankind. These three instances may serve as representatives of millions more, imaginable even by the limited faculties of the human mind.

Should it be said, that in the multitude of possible things, *there were many equally desirable;* and that between these, there is no foundation for a choice; I answer, that this is said gratuitously, and cannot be known to be true. Should the person who says it, intend, that the things specified are in all respects exactly alike, and only numerically different; it will be necessary to inquire, whether the object of choice proposed, is *to create only one of these similar things, and for that end to select one only.* If this be the thing intended, I answer; that he amuses himself with words; for as the things differ only numerically, one of them, when created, is equally the archetype of each of these images, and no more of one than of any other; and whatever is included in the nature, and operations, of them all, is completely realized in the existence of one. But, if the object of choice intended be, *whether only one or more than one, of these similar beings shall be created;* then I answer; that the objector has himself furnished a complete foundation for a preference: the cases now differing from each other, as an *unit differs from two, three, or more;* or *a single man from many;* a difference not only perceptible, but capable of being important, to any supposable degree. Should it be said, *that things may differ in some minute particulars*, and *yet furnish no solid foundation for a preference:* I reply, that it cannot be wisely, or warrantably, said, *We*, indeed, may not, and usually do not, perceive why things, differing very little, admit of such a preference; but to the intuitive, and all-comprehensive, view of God, a little difference between two things may, in the eternal progress of his dispensations, be such as to produce an influence on the Universe, so diverse, as to render one entirely beneficial, and the other wholly noxious. Few differences can be more minute, or trifling, to the human eye, than the existence of one hair more, or one less, on the human head, yet God has informed us, that these are all numbered by him; and that he sees a reason for preferring the number actually existing.

But should it be granted, *that things, materially differing, existing in any numbers, and making up, in several instances, complete and diverse systems, or universes, may yet be equally desirable in the view of God:* I answer further, that, in this case, *the object of choice would be to create one of these systems, and carry it into complete execution;* and, it being perfectly indifferent which of them should be brought into being, there would nothing remain to be resolved on, *but the act of creating.* That, which was begun in pursuance of this determination, would thenceforth for this very reason be preferable to the others, and be the most perfect possible system.

3. *This foundation for choice cannot but be perfectly known to God.*

As this position will not be questioned by any person, who admits the doctrine under the preceding head, and plainly cannot, but in defiance of reason; I proceed to observe,

4. *That God cannot but have chosen the existence of all those things, whose existence was on the whole desirable, and of no others.*

The benevolence of the divine character furnishes complete evidence of the truth of this position. The benevolence of God is boundless and perfect. It is the nature of benevolence to desire, and delight in, the existence of good; of perfect benevolence, to desire the existence of perfect good; and of boundless benevolence, to desire the existence of infinite good; or, in other words, of all which upon the whole is good. If, therefore, the existence of any thing is desirable, God cannot but have chosen it, because its existence was necessary to this perfect good; which is the supreme object, and delight, of his benevolence. The existence of any being, or event, is desirable, upon the whole, only because it is necessary to the perfect good, which I have mentioned, either by contributing to the existence, or by being itself a part, of that good. It is, therefore, completely evident, that God cannot but have chosen the existence of every thing, whose existence is upon the whole desirable.

5. *This choice of God, that things should exist, is the only divine energy, and the only cause of existence.*

The energy of a mind is *its will;* and this is synonymous with *its choice, generally understood;* each act of the will, being no other than an act of choice. What is thus true of every *finite* mind, is eminently true of the *Infinite* Mind. In the Infinite Mind, there are no successive acts of choice; but one universal and unchangeable pleasure, which gives birth to every thing. It is metaphysically proper to say, *that God wills all things into existence;* or that they are produced by his choice; in the full sense, in which any effect is said to be produced by its efficient cause. This I suppose will not be denied, so far as the existence of *beings* is concerned. The only question will probably respect *events;* and particularly those, which are called *the actions of moral or voluntary creatures.* With respect to these I observe, that it makes no difference, *as to*

the truth of this doctrine, whatever difference it may make as to others, whether we suppose God to will the existence of these beings, furnished with those faculties, which enable them to act in any given manner, and in the possession of which they will really act in that manner; or whether we suppose him to will the existence of their actions immediately. The pleasure, or choice, of God, in the former case, is the productive cause of the existence of these beings, and of their faculties. With these faculties, these beings, of course, will certainly, although without any necessity, except what is attributable to inclination, act in a given manner in every case. All the actions, of which they will thus be the subjects, were, antecedently to the existence of the beings in question, perfectly discerned by the Omniscience of God; and, so far as they will ever have existence, were objects of his choice or preference. He, therefore, willed into existence such beings, possessed of such faculties, as he knew would certainly give birth to the existence of their actions. Although, therefore, he may have chosen, that their actions should be the result of *their* energy, without a direct exertion of *his own*; it is clear, that he chose the existence of such beings, possessed of such faculties, with a perfect knowledge, that they would be the authors of such actions; and that the actions would exist. As, therefore, he chose, that beings, who, he certainly knew, would perform these actions, should exist; it is evident, that he also chose, upon the whole, the existence of the actions themselves.

It may, perhaps, be objected, that *this doctrine makes God the author of sin*; I answer, for the present, that *it makes God the author of a universe, in which he knew, that sin would exist.* A further answer will be given, when this subject comes to be particularly considered under the third head.

6. *The Scriptures directly assert the doctrine of this discourse.*

The text is a strong example of this nature. As it has been sufficiently illustrated already, I shall leave it to your consideration. In *Isaiah* xlv. 10, God says, *My counsel shall stand; and I will do all my pleasure.* This will be admitted to be a complete assertion of the doctrine, unless it should be supposed, that there are things done, and existing, in the universe, *which are without, and beyond, the counsel of God.* According to this supposition, it must be admitted, that *a part of the system of things in the universe was not contrived by him; was not agreeable to his pleasure; nor accomplished with his permission.* In *Isaiah* xliii. 13, God says, *I will work; and who shall let it?* and in *Daniel* iv. 35, it is declared, *He doth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?*

In both these passages, it is asserted, that there is no possible opposition, or hindrance, to the universal agency of God; which operates alike in heaven and in earth; and in both according to his

will, or pleasure. In Revelation iv. 11, *The four and twenty elders, falling down before Him, that sitteth on the throne in the heavens*, say, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created.* In this passage it is asserted, that all things were created, and exist, for the pleasure of God. It is irresistibly inferred, therefore, that they exist according to his pleasure. In *Acts* xv. 18, it is said, *Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world:* and, in Psalm civ. 31, *The Lord shall rejoice in his works.* It cannot be true, that *God will rejoice in his works*, unless they are agreeable to his pleasure; nor any farther than they are agreeable to his pleasure; for this would be to suppose, that he takes pleasure in that, which is not agreeable to his pleasure; or is pleased with that, which does not please him. As *all his works were known to him from the beginning;* so they were certainly agreeable to his pleasure from the beginning: else it could not be foreknown, and foretold, that *he will rejoice in them.*

That the actions of moral beings are foreknown by God is unanswerably evident from the fact, *that almost all the prophecies in the Scriptures are either predictions of the voluntary acts of such beings; or of events, accomplished by their voluntary actions; or of events, which without these actions could never exist.* The deluge was absolutely predicted to *Noah*, one hundred and twenty years before it took place; but, had mankind repented in that period, the deluge would not have existed. If, then, God had not certainly foreknown, that men would not repent; he could not have certainly foretold the deluge. God predicted the apostacy of the *Edomites;* the sojourning of the *Israelites* in *Egypt;* the refusal of *Pharaoh* to let them go; their return to the land of *Canaan;* the revolt of ten Tribes from *Solomon;* the ruin of their empire by *Nebuchadnezzar;* their captivity; their return; and their final destruction by the *Romans;* the life and death of Christ; the erection and progress of the Christian Church; and a vast multitude of other events, which cannot now be mentioned. These events were not only the voluntary actions of men, or the result of them, but involved thousands of millions of such actions, which preceded them, and were necessary to their existence. All these must have been perfectly foreknown by God; or the events could not, with either truth, or certainty, have been foretold. These actions, thus foreknown, were either agreeable, or contrary, to the pleasure of God; that is, upon the whole. If they were contrary to his pleasure; it was contrary to his pleasure, that they should exist. Either, then, the cause of their existence was sufficiently powerful to bring them into being, when he chose that they should not exist: or he chose that they should exist, contrary to his own pleasure; or, in other words, his own choice.

Christ is said by *St. Peter* to have been *delivered* to the *Jews by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.* If this declaration

can need proof; it is found abundantly in the numerous predictions of this event, contained in the Old Testament. CHRIST is said to have been *slain*, that is, in the purpose of God, *from the foundation of the world*. The calling, sanctification, conversion, and salvation, of the Christian Church, are said *to be according to the eternal purpose of God*. A vast multitude of declarations, importing the same things generally, might be added to these, were it necessary. But I shall only observe further, under this head, that the works of Creation and Providence are exhibited in the Scriptures as parts of one great plan, universally devised, and conducted, according to the good pleasure of God; extending to the clothing of grass and the falling of sparrows, the government of this world and the regulation of the heavens.

2dly. *I shall now consider some of the Difficulties, which result from a denial of this doctrine.*

That God made all beings, will not here be questioned. When he made them, he either made them with, or without, a design. If he acted *without design*, he acted without wisdom; and was therefore originally unwise, or unpossessed of wisdom: for nothing is more absolute folly, or indicates more an entire destitution of wisdom, than to act without design; or without an end; and especially to do such great and wonderful things, for so long a period, without any end in view.

If God acted *with design* in the Creation of all things; he either *provided for the certain accomplishment of the end, which he had in view; or he did not*. If *he did not*, it was because he was either *unable*, or *unwilling*, to do it. If he was *unable*, it was either because he knew not the means of doing it, or because he had not power to bring them to pass. In the former case, we deny his Omniscience; in the latter, his Omnipotence. When we behold the wonderful contrivance of the endless multitude of things in Creation and Providence, we cannot, in the exercise of Reason, doubt his Omniscience. When we call to mind, that they were brought into existence by his power, we cannot doubt his Omnipotence. He, who contrived the Universe, plainly knows all things: He, who made it, can plainly do all things, which in their nature are possible.

If God *was unwilling to provide for the accomplishment of the end, which he proposed in the Creation of all things;* it was either because *that end was not sufficiently dear to him*, or because *the accomplishment of it required more labour and self-denial than its importance would justify*. The end could not but be sufficiently dear to him. God certainly *could* propose to himself an end of infinite value; viz. the promotion of infinite good. If he did not propose this end; it was not because he was unable to propose it, but because he was unwilling. If he was unwilling to propose this end, when it was in full view before him; he was not only destitute of infinite benevolence; but, I apprehend, wholly destitute of

all benevolence; since, in this case, he preferred a good, which was comparatively nothing, (as being finite) to that which was infinite. If he is infinitely benevolent, and did actually propose, as the end of creating and governing the universe, an infinite good; then to him this end was infinitely dear.

He was *not prevented from providing for the accomplishment of this end because of the labour, or self-denial, which it would require.* To infinite benevolence, *no effort of choice* can be laborious, or self-denying; to Omniscience, *no effort of contrivance;* and to Omnipotence, no *effort of execution.* The Infinite Mind acts, of course, with perfect ease. *The Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary.*

If God did provide for the accomplishment of the end, which he had in view; then it *will either be accomplished, or it will not. If it will be accomplished,* the means, provided for this purpose, are all of the proper nature, and will operate in the proper manner, for its accomplishment. In other words, they will sustain precisely that nature, and operate in that manner, which was intended by the Infinite Mind, when the end was proposed, and the means were selected for bringing it to pass. Of course, both the end, and the means, were from the beginning known, proposed, chosen, and determined, by God.

He, therefore, who denies this doctrine, will, I think, find the denial followed by the immoveable difficulty of being obliged, at the same time, to deny the absolute perfection, and infinity, of the divine power, knowledge, or goodness.

Further; if the actions of voluntary beings are not, upon the whole, such as God originally chose they should be; it must be either *because he did not know what they would be;* or, *knowing this, did not choose to prevent their existence.* If he did not originally know what they would be; then his creatures communicate to him continually new ideas; and those, in endless multitudes. Of course, his views change daily; and, instead of being Omniscient originally, and eternally, he is not now, nor will he ever be Omniscient; but will, throughout Eternity, receive continual and vast accessions of knowledge, communicated to him by his voluntary creatures; who, in this case, devise what before he did not know, and act what before he never conceived. In this case also, his knowledge must, like ours, be successive, and mutable. Nay, as his mind is the greatest of all minds, and must, according to this supposition, continually imbibe knowledge; so, from its extent and comprehension, it must imbibe knowledge incalculably faster, and be more rapidly mutable, than that of any other being whatever.

Further; as the views of God continually enlarge, and change; so it is plain, that, together with his views, *his disposition* must change with respect to particular things, and ultimately with respect to his whole system; and that *his administrations,* and his measures, must in the same manner also change. New objects

sustain new characters, and new relations; and infer new proprieties of conduct, and of consequence new measures. The conduct, which it would be proper for God to adopt towards a being, whose character and actions are unknown to him, must be also unknown. Every creature, whose character and actions are new, and different from any thing before known, or conceived, must, if he be properly treated, receive a treatment differing from any, before exhibited, or contrived. As voluntary beings are, in a sense, endlessly numerous, and exist throughout eternity; so their actions, being, according to the supposition, unknown to God before they exist, must, in a multitude of instances, literally endless, demand a new treatment, or new measures, repeated in a manner, also literally endless. Of course, not only in his views, but also in his disposition and conduct, God must, according to this supposition, be the most unceasingly, and absolutely, changeable of all beings.

A being, whose conduct is, and must be, regulated by the actions of others, is plainly dependent on others, with respect to this prime part of his character. He cannot act, as he would originally, and absolutely, choose to act; but must act as *their* conduct requires him to act. God, therefore, being intimately, and inseparably, connected with all voluntary beings, is in this respect more dependent, according to this supposition, than any other being whatever.

But, if God *did know, originally, all the actions of voluntary beings, and did not choose to prevent their existence in any case;* then *they were, upon the whole, agreeable to his pleasure;* or *he chose, that they should exist, when, upon the whole, they were contrary to his pleasure.* That he could have prevented the existence of any actions whatever, if he pleased, we certainly know; because he could have prevented the existence of the beings, whose actions they were. If they were upon the whole contrary to his pleasure, and he yet chose that they should exist; then he chose, that actions should exist, whose existence was upon the whole contrary to his choice; which is no other than a self-contradiction.

Again; if God proposed infinite good as the end of all his conduct; and this end was infinitely dear to him, and is yet not certainly and completely accomplished; it must be because he is not able to accomplish it. This will not be pretended. But, if God does not foreknow the actions of voluntary beings, *he cannot be certain of the accomplishment of this end.* To the accomplishment of perfect and infinite good, it is plainly necessary, that every thing, pertaining to the system, should be in time, place, nature, and operations, exactly that, and only that, which contributes directly, as well as ultimately, its own proper efficacy to the promotion of this end. A perfect system plainly demands, that every part of it be necessary, and entirely fitted for the place, and operations, assigned to it; and that there be nothing contrary to, or aside from, the general purpose; nothing out of place, or time; nothing super-

fluous, and nothing defective; in a word, that there be just such means, and so many of them, as will perfectly accomplish the end, and that there be nothing more. But, in the case supposed, the actions of voluntary beings, unless accordant with the pleasure of God, can in no wise sustain the character of proper parts of a perfect system. Just so far, as they vary from this pleasure, they vary from the character specified. It will not be denied, that God is both able, and disposed, to plan a perfect system of good. It follows, therefore, that he certainly has planned such a system. Whatever accords not with his pleasure, upon the whole, accords not with this system; this being the thing, which is agreeable to his pleasure; but must be defective, or superfluous; out of place, or out of time; aside from, or contrary to, the perfection of the system. Consequently, if the actions of voluntary beings be not, upon the whole, accordant with the pleasure of God; he was not only unassured of the accomplishment of the end, which he proposed in creating and governing the universe; but he entered upon this great work without knowing, that it would be accomplished; and was originally certain, that the perfect good, which he proposed, would never exist.

Those, who deny this doctrine, are therefore, unless I am deceived, forced by their denial to acknowledge, that God is a limited, mutable, and dependent being; and that he orignally was, and ever must be, uncertain of the accomplishment of the great end, proposed in his works; or rather that he ever was, and will be certain, that it can never be accomplished. The magnitude of these difficulties I need not explain.

SERMON XV.

THE DECREES OF GOD.

Job xxiii. 13.—*But he is in one mind; and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth.*

IN my last discourse I asserted, from these words, the following Doctrine:

That all things, both beings and events, exist in exact accordance with the purpose, pleasure, or, what is commonly called the Decrees, of God.

In discussing this doctrine, I mentioned, that I should attempt,

I. To Explain it;

II. To Prove it; and

III. To answer the objections, commonly made against it.

Under the first head, after having mentioned several erroneous opinions, and forms of phraseology, frequently adopted concerning this subject, I expressed my own views of it in this manner: *What is commonly intended by the Decrees of God, is that choice, or pleasure, of the Divine Mind, eternally and unchangeably inherent in it, by which all things are brought into being.*

Under the second head, *I alleged several direct arguments in support of the doctrine; and then suggested several difficulties, which result from denying it.* These, by proving the *converse of the doctrine to be false*, indirectly proved *the doctrine to be true:* according to the general axiom, that every proposition, or *its converse, is true.*

I shall now, as I proposed, attempt,

III. *To answer the Objections, commonly made against this doctrine.*

These, I think, may be reduced to the following:

1st. *That it is equivalent to the Stoical doctrine of Fate, or Destiny:*

2dly. *That it exhibits God as the Author of sin:*

3dly. *That it destroys the Free Agency of rational creatures:* and,

4thly. *That it discourages all the Efforts of mankind towards Reformation.*

I will not say, that no other objections are brought against this doctrine; but I think of no others, which appear to be regarded, as material, by those who allege them; or which, if these be fairly obviated, would be supposed sensibly to affect the question in debate. These, therefore, I shall now proceed to consider in the order proposed.

1st. *It is objected, that the general doctrine of this discourse, is equivalent to the Stoical doctrine of Fate or Destiny.*

The Fate of the *Stoics*, as explained by *Cicero*, was of this nature. These Philosophers supposed a series, and it would seem an eternal one, in which each link of the vast chain was the effect of the preceding, and the cause of the succeeding, one: every link being alternately a cause and effect. These causes, so far as I understand the subject, (for it is not very clear, that we understand precisely what was the Stoical doctrine, nor that the Stoics understood, or united in, it themselves) were not considered by them as either intelligent, or voluntary; but as merely coerced by those which preceded, and as coercing those which followed. In other words, the doctrine was substantially the same with that of Atheists concerning an eternal series, which was exploded in a former Discourse.* To the irresistible efficacy of this series of causes, the Gods, acknowledged by the Stoics, were absolutely subjected; and Jupiter himself, their supreme Ruler, was utterly unable to resist, divert, or at all change, the order of things, brought to pass by the compulsion of this Fate, or Destiny.

He, who can find any resemblance between this doctrine, and that on which the present discourse is founded, must find it by the aid of an ingenuity, to which I can make no claim. I freely own, that I cannot perceive any similarity between an unintelligent and involuntary series of causes, compelling by natural necessity, or coercion, the existence of their consequent effects, and controlling by inevitable necessity the actions of both Gods and Men; and the free, wise, and voluntary, agency of the infinitely intelligent and benevolent Mind, originally planning, and steadily executing, a system of infinite good, according to the dictates of his boundless wisdom, and perfect pleasure. I cannot perceive a similarity, sufficient to enable me to discern in what the professed difficulty lies; or what the real objection is, which I am required to answer. I shall take the liberty, therefore, of waiting until I shall find the objection so stated, as either to induce me to acknowledge its force, or enable me to attempt a refutation.

2dly. *It is objected, that this doctrine exhibits God as the Author of sin.*

To the phrase, *Author of sin*, very different meanings are annexed by different persons. In order to meet this objection, therefore, with any hope of success, it will be necessary, in the first place, to determine the true meaning of the phraseology. Some persons understand by it *the immediate and efficient Cause of sinful volitions:* others, not only mean *the efficient, but the guilty, Cause of such volitions:* others, still, *such a Cause, as in any manner, however remote, lays a foundation for the existence of sin:* and others, *a Cause, supposed to be intelligent, which, when possessed of sufficient*

* See Sermon II.

power to prevent the existence of sin, did not interfere to prevent it. When it is said, that this doctrine exhibits God as the Author of sin; I shall, for the present, consider the phrase, *as used in one, or both, of the two first of these senses;* and regard the objector as intending, that, according to this doctrine, *God is either the guilty, or guiltless, immediate, and efficient, cause of sinful volitions in his creatures:* In other words, that *he constrains, or compels them to sin.* That the doctrine, which I have defended, involves this consequence, I cannot perceive, nor admit.

To support the objection, it must be shown, that God cannot will, and accomplish, the existence of voluntary agents, who, acting freely, shall nevertheless act in exact accordance with what is, upon the whole, his pleasure; and who, in the circumstances in which they are severally placed, and with the attributes which they severally possess, will, with perfect freedom, contribute, each his proper part and efficiency, towards the promotion of the infinite good, originally proposed as the end of the divine system. But this, I apprehend, has never been, and never will be, shown. It must be proved, that in the infinite multitude of possible free agents, present to the view of the divine Mind, there were none, possessed of such attributes, and capable of being placed in such circumstances, as, while they acted with perfect freedom, would also perfectly accomplish the purposes of the divine pleasure. No man will, I presume, attempt to prove this position. If it be granted, that such agents were possible, and that the Infinite Mind discerned their nature and character; it must, in order to support the objection, be proved, that God, having these agents in full view, chose not to select them, and bring them into existence. But this, I presume, will not be admitted by the objector himself. Till this can be done, however, the objection cannot be maintained.

That Sin is in the world, and that the world, with all which it contains, is under the government of God, in some sense or other, must be acknowledged by the objector himself; unless, on the one hand, he denies the divine government absolutely, or, on the other, the distinction between moral good and evil. Sin has, therefore, entered the world in some manner or other, while it was under the divine government. There are *three ways, in which men have attempted to explain the difficulty, involved in this fact.* Some persons assert, *that by his direct efficiency, God caused; others, that he permitted; and others still, that he could not prevent its existence.*

That God could not prevent the existence of sin cannot be maintained. He has prevented it in *the angels, who kept their first estate.* He prevented it in the person of Christ; who in his human nature *knew no sin.* He has promised, that he will prevent it, and he will therefore certainly prevent it, in *the spirits of just men made perfect* in the heavens. Should it be said, that these beings, by their own voluntary agency, and without any interference or influence on the part of God, continue in a state of holiness; I an-

swer, that this supposition affects not the point at all; for God plainly could have created every moral agent with exactly the same attributes, and placed them in exactly the same circumstances, with those several virtuous beings, who persist in holiness. Whatever we suppose to be the means, by which they are preserved from sin; those very means he certainly could have used, to preserve in the same effectual manner all others.

Beyond this, he has not only continued holiness in the minds of many of his creatures; but has restored it to vast multitudes, who had fallen into a state of hopeless guilt and pollution. This fact is a proof, that he could have continued it in the minds of these creatures, if he had judged this conduct to be, upon the whole, wise and good for him to pursue.

That God by an immediate agency of his own, creates the sinful volitions of mankind, is a doctrine, not warranted, in my view, either by Reason, or Revelation. There are, I know, many respectable men in modern times, and particularly in our own country, as there have been at other times, and in other countries, who have thought this the easiest way of arriving at satisfaction concerning this abstruse subject. I cannot, as some persons have thought it proper to do, attribute to these men evil designs. In many instances, at least, they appear to give as unquestionable proofs of piety and virtue, as are given by any others; and to devote their labours as cheerfully, and faithfully, to the promotion of truth and righteousness, in the world. Still, I cannot accord with this doctrine; nor hesitate to believe, that they have in several instances *darkened counsel by words without knowledge*. There is a bound, as I have remarked before, beyond which the mind cannot pass; and it is as easily found in investigating this subject, as in any course of human inquiry. The metaphysical nature of Moral Agency, both in God and his creatures, is a subject, perhaps as tenuous, as difficult to be fastened upon, and as easily evanescent from the mind, as any, which we attempt to examine. This, I think, is unanswerably evident from the fact, that no attempt thoroughly to explain it, has given extensive satisfaction, even to philosophical men, for any length of time.

The Theology of a part of this country appears to me to be verging, insensibly, perhaps, to those who are chiefly concerned, but with no very gradual step, towards a *Pantheism*, differing, materially, in one particular only, from that of *Spinosa*. He held, *that the Universe, which he supposed to be matter, and which he divided into cogitative or intelligent, and incogitative, was God; and that the several parts of it were no other than separate parts of the same great and Universal Being*. Thus he excluded the existence of all creatures; and of any work of creation, as well as all that, which is usually meant by the providence and government of the Creator. The Theology, to which I have referred, teaches, *that God is immaterial, intelligent and infinite; but denies, with Spinosa,*

the existence of finite, intelligent beings, as well as of those, which we call bodies; declaring, that what men usually call minds, or spirits, are no other than continued chains, or successions, of ideas and exercises, created immediately, and successively, by the Infinite Mind. The same reason is alleged by this system for the exclusion of finite agents from existence, which was alleged by *Spinosa* for excluding the existence of such agents, as well as an Infinite, Immaterial One, from his system; viz. *that mankind cannot conceive of such things, nor comprehend their nature:* a reason, which, if admitted, will indeed exclude from our belief, and reception, almost every doctrine. Particularly, on this ground we ought certainly to deny the existence of the Infinite Agent.

As I propose to consider the principal subject of these remarks in a discourse, devoted to it, it will be improper to anticipate, here, the things which I design to include in that discourse. It will be sufficient, for the present purpose, to observe, that the Scriptures directly inform us, that God is the Author of holiness, and this in many forms, and with great emphasis; that they no where assert, that he is the Author of sin, in the sense now under consideration; and that they every where attribute blame to man, as the guilty, and, in my view, the efficient, cause, of his own sins. A plain man, reading the Scriptures, never, I presume, derived from them the doctrine, *that God creates the sins of men.* Nor can he, without great pains-taking, and previous perplexity, be induced to admit it as a part of his creed. And let it be remembered, as a very just and very important remark of *Doddridge*, that the plain sense of the Scriptures, or that which naturally strikes the minds of plain men as the real meaning, is almost of course the true sense.

The existence of finite agents is at least as conceivable, and admissible, as that of an infinite Agent; and certainly involves no greater difficulties. Accordingly, this has been the universal doctrine of the human mind, as well as the only obvious exhibition of the Scriptures, concerning this subject. The common objection concerning this doctrine, is certainly trifling and groundless; viz. *that it makes creatures independent of their Creator.* Can *he* be independent, whose existence, attributes, and consequently actions, depend absolutely on the will of another; and who can be, and do, nothing, but what that other is pleased to permit?

Satisfied with this view of the subject, on which, however, I mean to dwell more particularly hereafter, I adopt without hesitation the second of these methods of explaining the introduction of Sin into the world; and unite with those, who assert, *that God permitted the existence of Sin;* or in the Scriptural language, *that he has in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.* It has not ever been proved, that these ways are *not* their own, in the most absolute sense; nor in the strictest metaphysical language, that God has not suffered all nations to walk in them; nor that this, connected with such a superintendence and control, as invariably directs

their conduct to ultimate good, and prevents it from terminating in ultimate evil, is not the whole of the immediate agency of God, so far as sin is concerned. That this scheme does not in any degree exhibit God as the Author of Sin, in either of the two first senses, must, I think, be acknowledged by every man, who believes in the perfections and government of God. That he has permitted Sin, and has not prevented its existence, are facts so evident, that they cannot become the subject of serious debate. At the same time, I cannot but observe, that those, who, when they speak of God as the Author of Sin, mean to indicate these facts as the import of this phrase, use language in an unwarrantable, and, in my view, dangerous and mischievous manner.

3dly. *It is objected, that this doctrine destroys the Free Agency of rational creatures.*

It will be easily perceived, that many of the observations, made under the last head, materially affect this also. Indeed these two objections are so connected in their nature, that it is impossible to consider one of them, to any extent, without anticipating, in some degree, the consideration of the other. To the observations, which I have already made, I shall, however, add several others, peculiarly referring to this objection.

There are but *two ways*, in which the agency of God can be supposed by the objectors to lessen, or destroy, the free agency of his creatures. *One is by compelling, or constraining, their actions: the other, by rendering the existence of their actions certain, before they take place.* That God compels, or constrains, the actions of his creatures; of men for example; certainly cannot be shown, nor even pretended; unless the compulsion exists in his decrees. Nor can it be shown to exist in his decrees, unless it is involved in the nature of his decrees, as such; or, in other words, unless the doctrine of this discourse is inconsistent with the nature of free agency in creatures. This, I presume, is the real opinion of those, who bring the objection, now under consideration. They regard the supposition, *that God has planned a certain system of things according to his own pleasure, and that he has made, and placed, men in such a manner, as that they will certainly do those things, and those only, which will accord with that pleasure*, as inconsistent with the doctrine, *that they are free agents.*

To this objection, to which I have intended to give its true import, and full force, it is commonly answered, *that the doctrine, which I have attempted to support, is capable of being clearly proved, both from Reason and Revelation; and that men are intuitively conscious of their own free agency, being irresistibly sensible, that they act spontaneously, and without any coercion, or constraint. Both doctrines being, therefore, true, and certain*, it is justly alleged, *that they are of course consistent with each other.*

It would seem, that this answer might as well satisfy the mind in the present case, as in numerous others, in which we perceive pro-

positions to be true, but are unable to discern the nature of their mutual connexion. But, as the objection is still insisted on, and seems to have no small weight in the minds of many persons, it will not be improper for me to offer some further considerations on the subject.

All those, who make the objection, agree as well as others, that *it is possible for a finite agent, possessed of certain supposable attributes, and placed in certain supposable circumstances, to be free in the absolute sense.* I shall take this for granted; because, otherwise, the objection itself, and the debate founded on it, can have neither place, nor meaning. We will suppose, then, *such an agent to exist; and to act, while he lived, in a manner perfectly free: while, at the same time, no being knew at all, in what manner he would act in any case whatever, until his actions had existed.* In this case, he would undoubtedly be allowed to possess all possible advantages for acting with perfect freedom. Lest I should not be thought to be sufficiently particular, I will suppose his actions *to be all absolutely contingent;* because some Philosophers suppose contingency to be an indispensable and inseparable attribute of a free action. We will, now, in the second place, suppose *this agent, without any change in his powers, or his circumstances, in any other respect, to have all his actions, which, according to the former supposition are the freest possible, foreknown by God, or some other being.* I ask, whether they would be at all the less free, in consequence of being thus foreknown? The powers, the circumstances, and the actions, of this agent, remain exactly the same as before: the agent himself (for that is included in the supposition) being perfectly ignorant, that his actions are thus foreknown. Can it be perceived, that this foreknowledge affects *the nature of the actions* in any manner, or *the freedom of the agent?* To me it is clear, that it cannot; because, in the case supposed, the foreknowledge has not the remotest influence on the agent, nor on his actions: both *he* and *they* continuing to be exactly the same, in every respect whatever. On the contrary, all the possible influence of this foreknowledge is confined to the bosom of him, by whom it is possessed.

But if this agent would thus continue free, and his actions would still be perfectly free, notwithstanding they were foreknown; then it is clear, that *a preceding certainty, that the actions of a voluntary agent will exist, does not at all, of itself, lessen, or affect, their freedom.* Foreknowledge renders the future existence of that, which is foreknown, certain: therefore the actions of the agent supposed are all rendered certain, and will of course exist: yet it is, I think, unquestionably clear from this statement, that their freedom will not be affected. Lest I should be thought guilty of an absurdity in supposing events absolutely contingent to be capable of being foreknown; I shall justify myself by observing, that *Dr. Gregory* has asserted, *that the voluntary actions of mankind are foreknown*

as mere contingencies; and is declared by a writer of respectability to have merited the thanks of the learned world for this discovery. For myself, I confess, that I not only discern no indispensable connexion between contingency and freedom of action; but no connexion at all; nor any possibility, that human actions, or any thing else, should be contingent. So far as I can see, the admission of casual, or contingent, existence, must, if we would make our principles consistent, be by consequence the admission of it in all cases whatever.

Again; we will suppose, *that the actions of the agent already specified, which are thus foreknown by God, are perceived by him, also, to be exactly agreeable to his pleasure.* Will this circumstance affect the freedom of agency? Surely it will not be asserted, nor believed, that actions, in order to be free, must contravene the pleasure of God. As I presume this proposition was never advanced by any man; and as it is an obvious absurdity in itself; I shall take the liberty to consider it as being an absurdity. It is therefore clear, *that the actions of a voluntary agent may be certainly foreknown by God to be exactly agreeable to his pleasure, and yet be attended with the highest possible freedom.*

That God knows all things, the knowledge of which involves not a contradiction; and that the foreknowledge of human actions does not involve a contradiction; I here consider as undisputed.

I have, I flatter myself, made it sufficiently evident, that God's foreknowledge of voluntary actions does in no respect lessen, or affect, their freedom; although it renders their future existence absolutely certain. But it will be said, by some persons at least, that the difficulty does not lie here; but in the fact, that *God has willed the existence of human agents, and their actions; and that it is his formation of them in such a manner, as to accomplish certain purposes of his own, which prevents, or destroys, the freedom in question.*

To remove the difficulty, presented by this observation, I will suppose once more *a voluntary agent either self-existent, or existing casually, possessing powers of understanding, similar in their extent to those of angels, or of men; and at the same time free in the highest sense, annexed to that term.* Let him be also supposed to be known, and comprehended, by God in the same perfect manner, in which any angel, or man, is known by him; so that God can foresee with an omniscient survey, and absolute certainty, all his future actions. At the same time, let it be supposed, that God exercises over him no government, or influence, whatever. This being will undoubtedly be acknowledged to be free, even by those, who make this objection; because he was neither brought into existence by the will of God; nor is controlled, nor influenced, in any manner whatever, by any will, beside his own. Let me further suppose, what, as it must be granted, cannot lessen, nor affect, his freedom; that all his actions, thus foreseen, are agreeable to the

divine pleasure. Now let me ask, whether the divine omniscience could not contrive, and the divine power create, a being exactly resembling this, which I have here supposed, in every respect; except that he was not self-existent, nor casually existent; and so perfect a copy, that he would differ from this supposed being numerically only; would possess the same attributes; be in the same circumstances; and perform, both in substance and mode, exactly the same actions. Were this supposed being, for example, to be placed by God in his kingdom, in certain circumstances, and acting a certain part, in the system, which was exactly agreeable to the divine pleasure; would not the created being who was his perfect counterpart, if substituted in his place, perform precisely the same actions, with the same faculties, and the same freedom? The only difference between them would be, that he, who was casually existent, would perform these actions in consequence of possessing such and such attributes, without having been created for this purpose; while the other would perform them, in consequence of having been thus created with the very same attributes. In their *origin*, I grant, these beings differ: in their *nature, character, and attributes*, they are precisely the same. But their origin, it is plain, cannot, even in the most distant manner, affect their attributes, or their actions. These, by the supposition, are exactly alike. If, therefore, the former of these beings is free; the latter is equally free. If the actions of the latter are foreknown by God; equally-so are those of the former; and they both alike fulfil his pleasure.

With these things in view, it must, I think, be evident, *that God can create a free agent, whose actions shall be all foreknown by him, and shall exactly accomplish what is, upon the whole, his pleasure.*

If these things are just, and true; the doctrine of this discourse does not destroy, lessen, nor affect in any manner, the free agency of rational creatures; unless it can be shown, as I am well assured it never can be, *that God has not created agents, whose attributes are agreeable to this representation.* There was not, indeed, present to his eye a self-existent, nor a casually existent, agent, such as I have supposed; but there were present to the view of his omniscience all the attributes and circumstances, which can enter into the existence and character of such an agent. If, then, he did not create beings of such a character; it was solely because he did not choose to create them.

4thly. *It is objected, that this doctrine discourages all the Efforts of mankind towards reformation.*

That this doctrine has often been used to discourage such efforts, I readily acknowledge. This is not unfrequently the tenor of books, and of conversation; nor is it an uncommon thing for persons to make it the source of discouragement to themselves; and to entertain gloomy and distressing apprehensions concerning their own final condition, when referred in their minds to the decrees of

God. Still I cannot see, that this conduct is wise, rational, or defensible; nor that the doctrine includes in itself any discouragement, which will not, with as good reason, flow from that, which is opposed to it. It cannot result from the consideration, *that the pleasure of God controls this subject, rather than our own pleasure.* On the one hand, the pleasure of God is more wisely and benevolently formed than our own; more disposed to promote our salvation; and more able to contrive the best means, by which it may be accomplished. This we never could have done ourselves; nor, if we were able, should we be willing: as is clearly proved by the fact, that, after the wonderful and difficult things, which have been done to provide salvation for us, and while it is proffered to us freely on the easiest of all terms, we are not willing to accept it. How much less willing should we have been to go through the labour and sufferings, could we have gone through them, which were necessary to procure it for ourselves.

On the other hand, if we please to be saved, we shall *now* be saved. This is one great part of the divine pleasure. There is nothing, which prevents us from being saved, but our own inclination; and this would as effectually prevent us in any supposable circumstances. Nor could we in any circumstances possess a greater freedom of choice, or action, with respect to this or any other subject, than we now possess. Nor is there, so far as I know, any influence from God, which at all hinders us from choosing salvation with all that freedom of action, which moral beings can possess. It will be observed, I speak not here of persons, for their incorrigible obstinacy, punished with judicial blindness, and hardness of heart; though it is to be questioned, *whether, even in this case, God does any thing more, than leave them to themselves.* The language of God to every sinner is, *As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the sinner; but would rather, that he would return, and live.* His invitations to sinners are, *Ho! every one that thirsteth; come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money: yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price:* and, *Whosoever will, let him come, and take the water of life freely.* This language is perfectly sincere, and exactly descriptive of the disposition of God.

This discouragement cannot arise from the certainty of the event, as established by this doctrine. The event is equally certain, if the doctrine is given up. It is equally certain in fact, with what Mr. Locke calls Certainty of truth, in distinction from Certainty of knowledge, concerning any man, that he either will, or will not, be saved, whether it be foreknown or not. One of these assertions, either that he will, or that he will not, be saved, is now certainly true. *Which* of them is true, I grant, does not appear; and will not, until time shall disclose it. Still, one of the events will take place, whether decreed, or foreknown, or not. God will then judge, and punish the wicked; and will punish them for exactly

the same reasons, on either supposition; viz. for their impenitence, unbelief, and disobedience. A person may, therefore, with exactly the same propriety, whether he admits the decrees of God, or not; or whether God has, or has not, formed any decrees; say, *If I shall be saved, I shall be saved, whether I try to obtain salvation or not: and, however earnestly I may try, if I am to perish, I shall perish.* The certainty, in either case, is the same, and equally absolute. Even the foreknowledge of God will not alter this fact at all; for though it affects him, it affects not the certainty of the event. All that can be truly said is, that an event, which would otherwise take place, is now foreseen by him. To us in both cases, also, it is equally unknown. The causes, which will bring it to pass, will in both cases be exactly the same. The language in both cases, therefore, may be adopted with exactly the same propriety. But the truth is, the language cannot be proper in either case. In my apprehension, it is never true, that the attempts of the man concerned, towards the attainment of salvation, make no difference as to the event. On the contrary it is clear, that of those, who are saved, few, very few, indeed, can be found, who have not made such attempts; nor is there any satisfactory reason to believe, that those, who make them with persevering earnestness and zeal, ultimately fail.

I know no reason, why the same language should not be used, with the same propriety and force, concerning our secular, as concerning our spiritual, business. But the farmer, who should loiter at home, and say, "If I am to have a crop the present year, I shall have one; and, if I am not to have a crop, I shall not have one, whether I plough, and sow, and reap, or lie down in my bed:" the student, who should spend his time in dress, sports, and gaming, and say, "If I am to be a scholar, or to get my lesson, I shall accomplish it; and, if I am not, it will never be accomplished, whether I study diligently, or lose my time in idleness:" would be pronounced, and justly, a fool or a madman. But the decree of God extends to each of these subjects as absolutely, as to our salvation. Men are as really chosen to be farmers, and scholars, as Christians: and learning and harvests are as truly appointed, as holiness: although from the comparative unimportance of the former, and the amazing moment of the latter, we are apt to apply the doctrine to one of the cases, and not to the other.

The kingdom of God, as established by his pleasure, is a kingdom of means, regularly connected with their ends. I do not perceive, that this is less true, when applied to spiritual, than to natural, things. The real discouragement, which men generally labour under with respect to their spiritual concerns, is their indisposition to make any efforts for the attainment of salvation. In truth, this indisposition itself suggests the discouragement, which I have obviated, and then admits it. To a dispassionate, unbiassed mind, it would never gain admission. By sober Reason it was never devised, and can never be supported.

Were God really unwilling, that men should strive; had he discountenanced efforts; had he established no means of grace; or had those means, when anxiously and perseveringly used, failed of success; there would, indeed, be ample room for well-founded discouragement. But, when we find, as in my view we do in fact find, all these things reversed in the good pleasure, and providence, of God; we have every inducement to hope, and to labour; much more, it would seem, than from any supposable situation, in which all things were left to fluctuation and casualty. Stupid sinners have indeed, according to this and every other scheme, the most fearful reason for discouragement and terror. But such as are awakened, anxious, and engaged, to seek eternal life, have solid and abundant reason for hope.

Mankind seem, in many instances, to suppose, that the decrees of God produce the event without means; according to the *Mohammedan* doctrine of predestination. Whereas, if they believed, that the pleasure of God formed the system, and selected the means and agents, by which all events are accomplished; if they believed those agents to be endued with all the powers of the freest possible agency, and to be selected, and formed, so that they might act with perfect freedom; if they believed, that God always furnishes them with the necessary means of obedience, and with motives to obedience, more and greater than any, which they can find, to disobey; if they believed, that God, by a direct agency of his own, does not constrain them to any act whatever, but leaves them in all instances to act, with perfect freedom, just as they please; I think they would also believe, that there is no more difficulty, attending the fact, that he has chosen, and formed, such agents, as he knew would unitedly do all his pleasure, than would attend his choice and formation of such agents, as would act in any other manner whatever. But all this, for ought that appears, is true. The contrary doctrine has never been evinced to be true; at least in my apprehension; and I fully believe never will be.

On the other hand, it will be proper, for a moment, to turn our thoughts to the influence of the supposition, that God has not fixed the system of things according to his Pleasure. It cannot but be acknowledged, that he knew what system was, upon the whole, most desirable, wisest, and best. If he did not resolve on it, it was plainly because he did not desire, or choose, to bring it to pass. In plain English, then, he did not desire the chief good of his creation, or the supreme glory of himself, with sufficient good-will to resolve on it. Can this be infinite good-will? Can it be moral perfection? It was certainly as easy for him to accomplish it, as to accomplish an inferior system of good. If, then, he did not resolve on the superior system; it was plainly because he loved the inferior system better, and chose to do less good, rather than greater. His disposition, therefore, is on this scheme, imper-

fectly good in itself; how imperfectly, it is impossible, according to this supposition, to determine.

According to this supposition, it is further to be observed, all things are left by God in a state of absolute uncertainty. The whole happiness of his intelligent creatures is committed to the casual influence and efficacy of their own views, feelings, and conduct. God cannot, in the nature of the case, interfere, either by determination, or influence, without destroying the free agency, or discouraging the efforts, of his Intelligent creatures, for the attainment of happiness. The whole system of the universe, so far as these creatures are concerned, must of course be regulated wholly by them. Does not this scheme evidently set all their interests afloat, and leave them eternally to the uncertain and hazardous direction of finite wisdom and goodness? From the experience, which we have had of the character and conduct of such creatures, is there a person in this assembly, who would willingly commit his eternal interests to this perilous direction, and trust his all to the disposal of beings so weak, and so often wicked? Can this be safe for creatures? Can it consist with the perfect character of God? To the wisdom and forecast of his own mind, a man might, through overweening self-confidence, be willing perhaps to commit the guidance of any interest, and feel that his Soul itself would be safe in his own hands. But would the same person trust himself to the final direction of others? Would he venture his eternal welfare upon the wisdom and benevolence of any, or all, of those by whom he is encircled? Their fitness for this mighty trust is, however, not inferior to his own; and they would as justly refuse to confide their souls to his care, as he would refuse to entrust his soul to them. Were he not blinded, therefore, by an unwarrantable partiality for himself, he would no sooner, no more willingly, trust himself in this mighty concern, than he would trust those around him. To do either, he would clearly discern, would be foolish and dangerous in the extreme. Wisdom, on the contrary, would teach both him and them to commit themselves, and their whole well-being, implicitly to God.

On the connexion of prayer with this subject, I design to dwell particularly, when I shall come to the consideration of that duty. I have purposely omitted the examination of it at the present time, because several things relating to it, belong to Prayer only, and demand a separate discussion.

Whether the observations, which I have made on the general doctrine of this discourse, will be viewed by others as possessing the importance, which I have attached to them, I cannot determine. To me, they have appeared to possess real weight. If they should contribute in any measure to remove difficulties, to settle doubtful opinions, to establish truth, and to communicate satisfactory views concerning a subject so often attended with perplexity and alarm; I shall esteem my labours amply rewarded.

SERMON XVI.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD.

JEREMIAH X. 23.—*O Lord, I know, that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man, that walketh, to direct his steps.*

IN this passage of Scripture, the prophet, after uttering a variety of sublime declarations concerning the perfections and providence of GOD, and the follies and sins of men, exhibits the progress of life as a Way. In this Way, all men are considered as travelling. We commence the journey at our birth; pass on through the several stages of childhood, youth, manhood, and old age, and finish it when we enter eternity. The accommodations, and the fare, are greatly varied among the various travellers. Some find their entertainment plentiful, and agreeable; and some, even luxurious and splendid. Others are slenderly provided with food, raiment, and lodging; are almost mere sufferers; and literally, *have not where to lay their heads.*

In the mean time, sorrow and disease, dangers and accidents, like a band of marauders, lie in wait for the travellers; and harass, and destroy, a great proportion of their number. Of the vast multitude, who continually walk in the path of life, almost all disappear long before they reach the goal, at which it terminates. A very few arrive at the end. Of these, every one, dragging heavily his weary feet over the last division of the road, teaches us, that this part of his progress is only *labour and sorrow.*

A remarkable fact, universally attendant on our journey, is recited in the text. *O Lord*, says the deeply humbled prophet, *I know, that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man, that walketh, to direct his steps.* The enterprise is not contrived by ourselves. We are placed in it, and necessitated to accomplish it, by a superior, and irresistible, hand. It cannot but seem strange, that in such a journey we should originally be prevented from the ability to direct ourselves; and that, while we are compelled to the undertaking, we should be furnished for it in a manner so imperfect. Yet such is unquestionably the fact. Nor is the explanation so difficult, or so unsatisfactory, as we are prone to believe. GOD originally intended, that all his creatures should be dependent on him for aid, guidance, and protection. Nor can it be rationally supposed, that such a dependence on his perfections, and providence, is either unreasonable or undesirable. *The Sovereignty of* GOD, which is so clearly, and strongly, visible in this interesting subject, has ever been questioned, and very often denied, by mankind. To establish this doctrine in the minds of

my audience, is the peculiar design of the present discourse. In a sermon, lately delivered in this place on *the decrees of* GOD, I explained what I intend by the divine Sovereignty. It was then observed, that *the conduct of* GOD *is sovereign*, in this sense; *that he does according to his will, independently and irresistibly, without giving an account of any of his matters any farther than he pleases; but that he wills nothing without the best reason, whether that reason be disclosed to his creatures, or not; that real glory to himself, and real good to his creation, not otherwise attainable, are universally the object, to which his pleasure is directed, whether it respects the existence, and motions, of an insect, or the salvation of a man.* It was remarked, also, at that time, that, in the ordinary sense of the word, GOD *never acts arbitrarily; and that to say, he wills a thing because he wills it, is to speak without meaning.* All his pleasure, all his determinations, are perfectly wise and good; founded on the best of all reasons, and directed to the best of all purposes. Were he to act in any other manner, his providence would be less wise, and less desirable.

It will not be questioned, that this doctrine is deeply interesting to man. On this life is suspended that, which is to come. Consequences, eternal and incomprehensible, will flow from those doctrines, which we adopt in the present world. All our conduct will then be examined; and will either be approved, or condemned. If we have chosen the strait, and narrow way, prescribed to us, the termination will be happy. If we have preferred *the broad and crooked road*, it will be deplorable.

Few of this audience will probably deny the truth of a direct Scriptural declaration. With as little reason can it be denied, that most of them apparently live in the very manner, in which they would live, if the doctrine were false: or that they rely, chiefly at least, on their own sagacity, contrivance, and efforts, for success in this life, and that which is to come. As little can it be questioned, that such self-confidence is a guide, eminently dangerous, and deceitful. Safe as we may feel under its direction, our safety is imaginary. The folly of *others* in trusting to themselves *we* discern irresistibly. The same folly *they* perceive, with equal evidence, in *us*. Our true wisdom lies in willingly feeling, and cheerfully acknowledging, our dependence on GOD; and in committing ourselves with humble reliance to his care and direction.

With these observations, I will now proceed to illustrate the truth of the doctrine. The mode which I shall pursue will, probably, be thought singular. I hope it will be useful. Metaphysical arguments, which are customarily employed for the purpose of establishing this, and several other doctrines, of theology, are, if I mistake not, less satisfactory to the minds of men at large, than the authors of them appear to believe. Facts, wherever they can be fairly adduced for this end, are attended with a superior power of conviction; and commonly leave little doubt behind them.

On these, therefore, I shall at the present time rely for the accomplishment of my design. In the

1st. place, *The doctrine of the text is evident, from the great fact, that the birth, and education, of all men, depend not on themselves.*

The succeeding events of life are derived, in a great measure at least, from our birth. By this event, it is in a prime degree determined whether men shall be princes or peasants, opulent or poor, learned or ignorant, honourable or despised; whether they shall be civilized or savage, free men or slaves, Christians or Heathen, *Mohammedans* or *Jews*.

A child is born of *Indian* parents in the western wilderness. By his birth he is, of course, a savage. His friends, his mode of life, his habits, his knowledge, his opinions, his conduct, all grow out of this single event. His first thoughts, his first instructions, and all the first objects, with which he is conversant, the persons whom he loves, the life to which he addicts himself, and the character which he assumes, are all savage. He is an Indian from the cradle: he is an Indian to the grave. To say, that he could not be otherwise, we are not warranted; but that he is not, is certain.

Another child is born of a *Bedouin Arab*. From this moment he begins to be an *Arabian*. *His hand is against every man; and every man's hand is against him.* Before he can walk, or speak, he is carried through pathless wastes in search of food; and roams in the arms of his mother, and on the back of a camel, from spring to spring, and from pasture to pasture. Even then he begins his conflict with hunger and thirst; is scorched by a vertical sun; shrivelled by the burning sand beneath; and poisoned by the breath of the Simoom. Hardened thus through his infancy and childhood, both in body and mind, he becomes, under the exhortations, and example, of his father, a robber from his youth; attacks every stranger, whom he is able to overcome; and plunders every valuable thing, on which he can lay his hand.

A third receives his birth in the palace of a *British* nobleman; and is welcomed to the world as the heir apparent of an ancient, honourable, and splendid family. As soon as he opens his eyes on the light, he is surrounded by all the enjoyments, which opulence can furnish, ingenuity contrive, or fondness bestow. He is dandled on the knee of indulgence; encircled by attendants, who watch, and prevent, alike his necessities and wishes; cradled on down; and charmed to sleep by the voice of tenderness and care. From the dangers, and evils, of life, he is guarded with anxious solicitude. To its pleasures, he is conducted by the ever-ready hand of maternal affection. His person is shaped, and improved, by a succession of masters; his mind is opened, invigorated, and refined, by the assiduous superintendence of learning and wisdom. While a child, he is served by a host of menials, and flattered by successive trains of visiters. When a youth, he is regarded by a band

of tenants with reverence and awe. His equals in age bow to his rank; and multitudes of superior years, acknowledge his distinction by continual testimonies of marked respect. When a man, he engages the regard of his sovereign; commands the esteem of the Senate; and earns the love, and applause, of his country.

A fourth child, in the same kingdom, is begotten by a beggar, and born under a hedge. From his birth, he is trained to suffering and hardihood. He is nursed, if he can be said to be nursed at all, on a coarse, scanty, and precarious pittance; holds life only as a tenant at will; combats from the first dawnings of intellect with insolence, cold, and nakedness; is originally taught to beg, and to steal; is driven from the doors of men by the porter, or the house-dog; and is regarded as an alien from the family of *Adam*. Like his kindred worms, he creeps through life in the dust; dies under the hedge, where he is born; and is then, perhaps, cast into a ditch, and covered with earth, by some stranger, who remembers, that, although a beggar, he still was a man.

A child enters the world in *China;* and unites, as a thing of course, with his sottish countrymen in the stupid worship of the idol *Fo*. Another prostrates himself before the *Lama*, in consequence of having received his being in *Thibet*, and of seeing the *Lama* worshipped by all around him.

A third, who begins his existence in *Turkey*, is carried early to the mosque; taught to lisp with profound reverence the name of *Mohammed;* habituated to repeat the prayers, and sentences, of the *Koran*, as the means of eternal life; and induced, in a manner irresistibly, to complete his title to Paradise by a pilgrimage to *Mecca*.

The *Hindoo* infant grows into a religious veneration for the cow; and perhaps never doubts, that, if he adds to this a solemn devotion to *Juggernaut*, the *Gooroos*, and the *Dewtahs*, and performs carefully his ablutions in the *Ganges*, he shall wash away all his sins, and obtain, by the favour of *Brahma*, a seat among the blessed.

In our own favoured country, one child is born of parents, devoted solely to this world. From his earliest moments of understanding, he hears, and sees, nothing commended, but hunting, horse-racing, visiting, dancing, dressing, riding, parties, gaming, acquiring money with eagerness and skill, and spending it in gayety, pleasure, and luxury. These things, he is taught by conversation, and example, constitute all the good of man. His taste is formed, his habits are riveted, and the whole character of his soul is turned, to them, before he is fairly sensible, that there is any other good. The question, whether virtue and piety are either duties or blessings, he probably never asks. In the dawn of life, he sees them neglected, and despised, by those, whom he most reverences; and learns only to neglect, and despise, them also. Of JEHOVAH he thinks as little, and for the same reason, as a *Chinese* or a *Hindoo*. *They* pay their devotions to *Fo*, and to *Juggernaut: he*, his to

money, and pleasure. Thus he lives, and dies, a mere animal; a stranger to intelligence and morality, to his duty and his GOD.

Another child comes into existence in the mansion of Knowledge, and Virtue. From his infancy, his mind is fashioned to wisdom and piety. In his infancy he is taught, and allured, to remember his Creator; and to unite, first in form, and then in affection, in the household devotions of the morning and evening. GOD he knows almost as soon, as he can know any thing. The presence of that glorious being he is taught to realize almost from the cradle; and from the dawn of intelligence, to understand the perfections, and government, of his Creator. His own accountableness, as soon as he can comprehend it, he begins to feel habitually, and alway. The way of life through the Redeemer is early, and regularly, explained to him by the voice of parental love; and enforced, and endeared, in the house of GOD. As soon as possible, he is enabled to read, and persuaded to *search, the Scriptures*. Of the approach, the danger, and the mischiefs, of temptations, he is tenderly warned. At the commencement of sin, he is kindly checked in his dangerous career. To GOD he was solemnly given in baptism. To GOD he was daily commended in fervent prayer. Under this happy cultivation he grows up, *like an olive tree in the courts of the Lord;* and, green, beautiful, and flourishing, he blossoms; bears fruit; and is prepared to be transplanted by the Divine hand to a kinder soil in the regions above.

How many, and how great, are the differences in these several children. How plainly do they all, in ordinary circumstances, arise out of their birth. From their birth is derived, of course, the education, which I have ascribed to them; and from this education spring in a great measure both their character, and their destiny. The place, the persons, the circumstances, are here evidently the great things, which in the ordinary course of Providence appear, chiefly, to determine what the respective men shall be; and what shall be those allotments, which regularly follow their respective characters. As, then, they are not at all concerned in contriving, or accomplishing, either their birth, or their education; it is certain, that, in these most important particulars, the way of man is not in himself. GOD only can determine what child shall spring from parents, wise or foolish, virtuous or sinful, rich or poor, honourable or infamous, civilized or savage, Christian or Heathen.

I wish it to be distinctly understood, and carefully remembered, that *in the moral conduct of all these individuals no physical necessity operates*. Every one of them is absolutely a free agent; as free, as any created agent can be. Whatever he does is the result of choice, absolutely unconstrained.

Let me add, that not one of them is placed in a situation, in which, if he learns, and performs, his duty to the utmost of his power, he will fail of being finally accepted.

2dly. *The doctrine is strikingly evident from this great fact also;*

that the course of life, which men usually pursue, is very different from that, which they have intended.

Human life is ordinarily little else than a collection of disappointments. Rarely is the life of man such as he designs it shall be. Often do we fail of pursuing, at all, the business, originally in our view. The intentional farmer becomes a mechanic, a seaman, a merchant, a lawyer, a physician, or a divine. The very place of settlement, and of residence through life, is often different, and distant, from that, which was originally contemplated. Still more different is the success, which follows our efforts.

All men intend to be rich and honourable; to enjoy ease; and to pursue pleasure. But how small is the number of those, who compass these objects. In this country, the great body of mankind are, indeed, possessed of competence; a safer, and happier, lot, than that, to which they aspire; yet few, very few are rich. Here also, the great body of mankind possess a character, generally reputable; but very limited is the number of those, who arrive at the honour which they so ardently desire, and of which they feel assured. Almost all stop at the moderate level, where human efforts appear to have their boundary established in the determinations of God. Nay, far below this level, creep multitudes of such as began life with full confidence in the attainment of distinction and splendour.

The Lawyer, emulating the eloquence, business, and fame, of *Murray* or *Dunning*, and secretly resolved not to slacken his efforts, until all his rivals in the race of glory are outstripped, is often astonished, as well as broken-hearted, to find business and fame pass by his door, and stop at the more favoured mansion of some competitor, in his view less able, and less discerning, than himself.

The Physician, devoted to medical science, and possessed of distinguished powers of discerning, and removing, diseases, is obliged to walk; while a more fortunate empiric, ignorant and worthless, rolls through the streets in his coach.

The Legislator beholds with anguish and amazement, the suffrages of his countrymen given eagerly to a rival candidate, devoid of knowledge and integrity; but skilled in flattering the base passions of men, and deterred by no hesitations of conscience, and no fears of infamy, from saying, and doing, any thing, which may secure his election.

The Merchant often beholds with a despairing eye his own ships sunk in the ocean; his debtors fail; his goods unsold; his business cramped; and himself, his family, and his hopes, ruined: while a less skilful, but more successful, neighbour, sees wealth blown to him by every wind, and floated on every wave.

The crops of the Farmer are stinted; his cattle die; his markets are bad; and the purchaser of his commodities proves to be a cheat who deceives his confidence, and runs away with his property.

Thus the darling schemes, and fondest hopes, of man, are daily frustrated by time. While sagacity contrives, patience matures, and labour industriously executes; disappointment laughs at the curious fabric, formed by so many efforts, and gay with so many brilliant colours; and, while the artists imagine the work arrived at the moment of completion, brushes away the beautiful web, and leaves nothing behind.

The designs of men, however, are, in many respects, not unfrequently successful. The Lawyer and Physician acquire business and fame; the Statesman, votes; and the Farmer, wealth. But their real success, even in this case, is often substantially the same with that, already recited. In all plans, and all labours, the supreme object is *to become happy*. Yet, when men have actually acquired riches and honour, or secured to themselves popular favour, they still find the happiness, which they expected, eluding their grasp. Neither wealth, fame, office, nor sensual pleasure, can yield such good, as *we* need. As these coveted objects are accumulated; the wishes of man always grow faster than his gratifications. Hence, whatever he acquires, he is usually as little satisfied, and often less, than before.

A principal design of the mind in labouring for these things is *to become superior to others*. But almost all rich men are obliged to see, and usually with no small anguish, others richer than themselves; honourable men, others more honourable; voluptuous men, others, who enjoy more pleasure. The great end of the strife is therefore unobtained; and the happiness, expected, never found. Even the successful competitor in the race utterly misses his aim. The real enjoyment existed, although it was unperceived by him, in the mere strife for superiority. When he has outstripped all his rivals, the contest is at an end: and his spirits, which were invigorated only by contending, languish for want of a competitor.

Besides, the happiness in view was only the indulgence of pride, or mere animal pleasure. Neither of these can satisfy, or endure. A rational mind may be, and often is, so narrow, and grovelling, as not to aim at any higher good, to understand its nature, or to believe its existence. Still, in its original constitution, it was formed with a capacity for intellectual, and moral, good; and was destined to find in this good its only satisfaction. Hence, no inferior good will fill its capacity, or its desires. Nor can this bent of its nature ever be altered. Whatever other enjoyment, therefore, it may attain; it will, without this, still crave, and still be unhappy.

No view of the ever-varying character, and success, of mankind, in their expectations of happiness, and their efforts to obtain it, can illustrate this doctrine more satisfactorily than that of the progress, and end, of a class of students in this Seminary. At their first appearance here, they are all exactly on the same level. Their character, their hopes, and their destination, are the same. They are enrolled on one list; and enter upon a collegiate life with

the same promise of success. At this moment they are plants, appearing just above the ground; all equally fair and flourishing. Within a short time, however, some begin to rise above others; indicating by a more rapid growth a structure of superior vigour, and promising both more early and more abundant fruit.

Some are studious; steadfast; patient of toil; resolved on distinction; in love with science; and determined, with unbroken ambition, never to be left behind by their companions. Of these a part are amiable, uniform in their morals, excellent in their dispositions, and honourable by their piety. Another part, although less amiable, are still decent; pleasant in their temper; uncensurable in their conduct; and reputable in their character.

Others are thoughtless; volatile; fluttering from object to object, particularly, from one scene of pleasure to another; alighting only for a moment; never settling; regardless of every thing, except the present gratification; and most regardless of their time, their talents, their duty, and their souls.

Others, still, are openly vicious; idle; disorderly; gamblers; profane; apparently infidels; enemies to themselves; undutiful to their parents; corrupters of their companions; and disturbers of the collegiate peace.

When the class, which these individuals originally constituted, leaves this seat of science; a number of them will always be missing. Some of these have been sent away by the mandate of law; some have voluntarily deserted their education; and some, not very unfrequently, have gone to the grave. Of those who remain, the character, and the prospects, have usually become widely different. The original level is broken, and broken for ever.

How different from all this, were their parents' expectations, and their own!

Still, when they enter the world, they all intend to be rich, honourable, and happy. Could they look into futurity, and discern the events, which it will shortly unfold; how changed would be their apprehensions!

One, almost at his entrance into life, knowing but inexperienced, discerning but not wise, urged by strong passions, and secure in self-confidence, pushes boldly forward to affluence, and distinction; but, marked as the prey of cunning, and the victim of temptation, is seduced from prudence and worth, to folly, vice, and ruin. His property is lost by bold speculation; his character by licentiousness; and the man himself by the disappointment of his hopes, and the breaking of his heart.

Another, timid, humble, reluctant to begin, and easily discouraged from pursuing, insensible to the charms of distinction, and a stranger to the inspiration of hope, without friends to sustain, and without prospects to animate, begins to flag, when he commences his connexion with the world; creeps through life, because he dares not attempt to climb; and lives, and dies, scarcely known beyond the limits of his native village.

A third yields himself up a prey to sloth; and shrinks into insignificance for want of exertion.

A fourth, possessed of moderate wishes, and preferring safety to grandeur, steers of design between poverty and riches, obscurity and distinction; walks through life without envying those who ride; and finds, perhaps, in quiet and safety, in an even course of enjoyment, and in the pleasure of being beloved rather than admired, the happiness, which his more restless companions seek from opulence, power, and splendour, in vain.

A fifth, cheerful, fraught with hope, and assured by the gayety and bustle, which he sees around him, that the world is filled with good, moves onward to acquire it, without a suspicion of disappointment, or danger. At once he is astonished to find, that men, who look pleasantly on him, are not his friends; that a smile of approbation is no evidence of good-will; and that professions, and promises, convey to him no assurance of aid, or comfort. To be dependent, he soon learns, is to be friendless; and to need assistance, a sufficient reason for having it refused. The business, which he expected to court his acceptance, flies from him; the countenance, on which he reposed, is withdrawn; and the hopes, which he gayly cherished, begin early to wither. Alone, forgotten, unprepared for struggles, and never mistrusting that struggles would be necessary; he is overset by the suddenness, and violence, of the shock; and either falls into listlessness, and stupor, or dies of a broken heart.

A sixth, from imbecility of constitution, or the malignant power of accident, sickens, and expires, when he has scarcely begun to live.

A seventh, with vigorous industry, effort, and perseverence, goes steadily forward to wealth and distinction. Yet even *he* finds the void of his mind unsupplied by real good. He is rich, and great; but not happy. That enchanting object, happiness, wrought into such elegance of form, and adorned with such brilliant colours, has ever fascinated his mind. Lost in wonder and delight, and gazing with an eager and bewildered eye, he never considered, that in this world the rainbow, with all its splendour, was only painted on a cloud; and, while he roves from field to field, and climbs from one height to another, in pursuit of the fairy vision, is astonished to behold it still retreat before him, and finally vanish for ever.

Were I to ask the youths, who are before me, what are their designs, and expectations, concerning their future life; and write down their several answers; what a vast difference would ultimately be found between those answers, and the events, which would actually befal them! To how great a part of that difference would facts, over which they could have no control, give birth! How many of them will in all probability be less prosperous, rich, and honourable, than they now intend: how many, devoted to employments, of which at present they do not even dream; in circumstances, of which they never entertained even a thought; behind those.

whom they expected to outrun; poor, sick, in sorrow or in the grave.

3dly. *The doctrine is further evident from the fact, that Life does not depend upon man.*

All intend to live; and feel secure of many years: but how often does death frustrate this intention, and dissolve the charm of this security! How many leave the world at an immature age! How many, in the midst of bold projects, sanguine desires, and strenuous exertions! How many asterisks appear with a melancholy aspect even in the younger classes of the triennial catalogue: marking solemnly, to a considerate mind, the termination of parental hopes, and the vanity of youthful designs! Where now are multitudes of those, who a little while since lived, and studied, and worshipped, here, with fond views of future eminence and prosperity, and with as fair a promise, as can be found, of future success, usefulness, and honour?

As we are unable to assure ourselves even of a single day; much more, of a long life; it is plain, that our eternal state lies beyond our control. As death finds us, so the Judgment will certainly find us. He therefore, who *kills*, as well as *makes alive*, at his pleasure, must of course hold in his hands, only, all our allotments, which lie beyond the grave.

I have not called up this doctrine, at the present time, for the purpose of entering into any of those metaphysical disquisitions, which restless curiosity, rather than sound wisdom, has commonly founded on it; but on the one hand to give it its proper place in this system of discourses, and on the other to derive from it several practical observations, which, there is reason to hope, may, by the blessing of GOD, be useful to those, who hear me; especially to those, who are students in this Seminary.

REMARKS.

1st. *You see here, my young friends, the most solid reasons for Gratitude to your Creator.*

GOD, only, directed, that you should be born in this land, and in the midst of peace, plenty, civilization, freedom, learning, and religion; and that your existence should not commence in a *Tartarian* forest, or an *African* waste. GOD alone ordered, that you should be born of parents, who knew, and worshipped, Him, the glorious, and eternal JEHOVAH; and not of parents, who bowed before the *Lama*, or the *ox*, an image of brass or the stock of a tree. In the book of his counsels, your names, so far as we are able to judge, were written in the fair lines of mercy. It is of his overflowing goodness, that you are now here; surrounded with privileges, and beset with blessings; educated to knowledge, usefulness, and piety, and prepared to begin an endless course of happiness and glory. All these delightful things have been poured into your lap; and have come, unbidden, to solicit your acceptance. If these blessings awaken

not gratitude; it cannot be awakened by blessings in the present world. If they are not thankfully felt by *you;* it is because you know not how to be thankful. Think what you are, and where your are; and what, and where, you just as easily might have been. Remember, that, instead of cherishing tender affections, imbibing refined sentiments, exploring the field of science, and assuming the name, and character, of the sons of GOD, you might as easily have been dozing in the smoke of a wigwam, brandishing a tomahawk, or dancing round an embowelled captive; or that you might yourselves have been embowelled by the hand of superstition, and burnt on the altars of *Moloch.* If you remember these things; you cannot but call to mind, also, *who made you to differ* from the miserable beings, who have thus lived, and died.

2dly. *This doctrine forcibly demands of you moderate desires, and expectations.*

There are two modes, in which men seek happiness, in the enjoyments of the present world. *Most persons freely indulge their wishes; and intend to find objects sufficient in number, and value, to satisfy them.* A few *aim at satisfaction by proportioning their desires to the number, and measure, of their probable gratifications.* By the doctrine of the text, the latter method is stamped with the name of wisdom; and on the former is inscribed the name of folly. Desires, indulged, grow faster, and farther, than gratifications extend. Ungratified desire is misery. Expectations eagerly indulged, and terminated by disappointment, are often exquisite misery. But how frequently are expectations raised, only to be disappointed; and desires let loose, only to terminate in distress! The child pines for a toy: the moment he possesses it, he throws it by, and cries for another. When they are piled up in heaps around him, he looks at them without pleasure, and leaves them without regret. He knew not, that all the good, which they could yield, lay in expectation; nor that his wishes for more would increase faster than toys could be multiplied; and is unhappy, at last, for the same reason, as at first: his wishes are ungratified. Still indulging them, and still believing that the gratification of them will furnish the enjoyment for which he pines, he goes on, only to be unhappy.

Men are merely taller children. Honour, wealth, and splendour, are the toys, for which grown children pine; but which, however accumulated, leave them still disappointed, and unhappy. GOD never designed, that intelligent beings should be satisfied with these enjoyments. By his wisdom and goodness, they were formed to derive their happiness from Virtue.

Moderated desires constitute a character, fitted to acquire all the good, which this world can yield. He, who is prepared, *in whatever situation he is, therewith to be content,* has learned effectually the science of being happy; and possesses the alchymic stone, which will change every metal into gold. Such a man will smile upon a stool; while *Alexander,* at his side, sits weeping on the throne of the world.

The doctrine of the text teaches you irresistibly, that, since you cannot command gratifications, you should command your desires; and that, as the events of life do not accord with your wishes, your wishes should accord with *them*. Multiplied enjoyments fall to but few men; and are no more rationally expected than the highest prize in a lottery. But a well regulated mind, a dignified independence of the world, and a wise preparation to possess one's soul in patience, whatever circumstances may exist, is in the power of every man; and is greater wealth than that of both Indies, and greater honour than *Cæsar* ever acquired.

3dly. *As your course, and your success, through life, are not under your control; you are strongly urged to commit yourselves to* GOD, *who can control both.*

That you cannot direct your course through the world; that your best concerted plans will often fail; that your sanguine expectations will be disappointed; and that your fondest worldly wishes will terminate in mortification; cannot admit of a momentary doubt. That GOD can direct you; that he actually controls all your concerns; and that, if you commit yourselves to his care, he will direct you kindly, and safely; can be doubted only of choice. Why, then, do you hesitate to yield yourselves, and your interests, to the guidance of your Maker? There are two reasons, which appear especially to govern mankind in this important concern: they do not, and will not, realize the agency of GOD in their affairs; and they do not choose to have them directed as they imagine he will direct them. The former is the result of stupidity; the latter, of impiety. Both are foolish in the extreme; and not less sinful than foolish.

The infinitely wise, great, and glorious, Benefactor of the universe, has offered to take men by the hand, lead them through the journey of life, and conduct them to his own house in the heavens. The proof of his sincerity in making this offer has been already produced. He has given his own Son to live, and die, and rise, and reign, and intercede, for our race. *Herein is love*, if there ever was love; *not that we have loved him, but that he has loved us.* That he, who has done this, should not be sincere, is impossible. *St. Paul*, therefore, triumphantly asks, what none can answer: *He, that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?* Trust, then, his word with undoubting confidence; take his hand with humble gratitude; and with all the heart obey his voice, which you will every where hear, saying, *this is the way, walk ye therein.* In sickness and in health, by night and by day, at home and in crowds, he will watch over you with tenderness inexpressible. He will *make you lie down in green pastures; lead you beside the still waters; and guide you in paths of righteousness; for his name's sake. He will prepare a table before you in the presence of your enemies; and cause your cup to run over with blessings. When you pass*

through the waters of affliction, *he will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle on you.* From their native heavens, he will commission those charming twin-sisters, Goodness and Mercy, to descend, and *follow you all your days.*

But if you wish GOD to be your guide, and your friend, you must conform to his pleasure. Certainly you cannot wonder, that the infinitely Wise should prefer his own wisdom to yours; and that he should choose for his children their allotments, rather than leave them to choose for themselves. That part of his pleasure, which you are to obey, is all summed up in the single word, Duty; and is perfectly disclosed in the Scriptures. The whole scheme is so formed, as to be plain, easy, profitable, and delightful; profitable in hand; delightful in the possession. Every part, and precept, of the whole, is calculated for this end; and will make you only wise, good, and happy.

Life has been often styled an ocean; and our progress through it, a voyage. The ocean is tempestuous and billowy, overspread by a cloudy sky, and fraught beneath with shelves and quicksands. The voyage is eventful beyond comprehension; and at the same time, full of uncertainty, and replete with danger. Every adventurer needs to be well prepared for whatever may befal him, and well secured against the manifold hazards of losing his course, sinking in the abyss, or of being wrecked against the shore.

These evils have existed at all times. The present, and that part of the past, which is known to you by experience, has seen them multiplied beyond example. It has seen the ancient, and acknowledged, standards of thinking violently thrown down. Religion, morals, government, and the estimate formed by man of crimes and virtues, and of all the means of usefulness and enjoyment, have been questioned, attacked, and in various places, and with respect to millions of the human race, finally overthrown. A licentiousness of opinion, and conduct, daring, outrageous, and rending asunder every bond, formed by GOD or man, has taken place of former good sense, and sound morals; and has long threatened the destruction of human good. Industry, cunning, and fraud, have toiled with unrivalled exertions, to convert man into a savage, and the world into a desert. A wretched, and hypocritical, philanthropy, also, not less mischievous, has stalked forth as the companion of these ravagers: a philanthropy born in a dream, bred in a novel, and living only in professions. This guardian genius of human interests, this friend of human rights, this redresser of human wrongs, is yet without a heart to feel, and without a hand to bless. But she is well furnished with lungs, with eyes, and a tongue. She can talk, and sigh, and weep, at pleasure; but can neither pity, nor give. The objects of her attachment are either knaves and villains at home, or unknown sufferers.

beyond her reach abroad. To the former, she ministers the sword and the dagger, that they may fight their way into place, and power, and profit. At the latter, she only looks through a telescope of fancy, as an astronomer searches for stars, invisible to the eye. To every real object of charity, within her reach, she complacently says, *Be thou warmed; and be thou filled; depart in peace.*

By the daring spirit, the vigorous efforts, and the ingenious cunning, so industriously exerted on the one hand, and the smooth and gentle benevolence, so softly professed on the other, multitudes have been, and you easily may be, destroyed. The mischief has indeed, been met, resisted, and overcome; but it has the heads, and the lives, of the Hydra; and its *wounds*, which at times have seemed *deadly*, are much more readily *healed*, than any good man could wish, than any sober man could expect. Hope not to escape the assaults of this enemy: To feel, that you are in danger, will ever be a preparation for your safety. But it will be only such a preparation; your deliverance must ultimately, and only, flow from your Maker. Resolve, then, to commit yourselves to him, with a cordial reliance on his wisdom, power, and protection. Consider how much you have at stake; that you are bound to eternity; that your existence will be immortal; and that you will either rise to endless glory, or be lost in absolute perdition. Heaven is your proper home. The path, which I have recommended to you, will conduct you safely, and certainly, to that happy world. Fill up life, therefore, with obedience to God; with faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and repentance unto life; the obedience to the two great commands of the Gospel; with supreme love to God, and universal good-will to men; the obedience to the two great commands of the law. On all your sincere endeavours to honour him, and befriend your fellow-men, he will smile: every virtuous attempt he will bless: every act of obedience he will reward. Life in this manner will be pleasant amid all its sorrows; and beams of hope will continually shine through the gloom, by which it is so often overcast. Virtue, the seed that cannot die, planted from heaven, and cultivated by the divine hand, will grow up in your hearts with increasing vigour, and blossom in your lives with supernal beauty. Your *path* will be that of *the just;* and will gloriously resemble the dawning light, *which shines brighter, and brighter, to the perfect day.* Peace will take you by the hand, and offer herself as the constant and delightful companion of your progress. Hope will walk before you, and with an unerring finger point out your course; and Joy, at the end of the journey, will open her arms to receive you. You will *wait on the Lord, and renew your strength; will mount up with wings, as eagles; will run, and not be weary; will walk, and not faint.*

SERMON XVII.

CREATION.—AIR.—STARRY AND SUPREME HEAVENS.

GENESIS i. 1.—*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*

IN the preceding discourses I have considered *the existence and perfections of God; his decrees*, or *that pleasure, or choice, with which he willed the existence of all things; and the sovereignty with which he disposes of them.* The next subject in such a system of discourses is *the Works of God;* which are no other than the execution of that pleasure. These are generally and justly distributed under two great heads, *Creation and Providence.* Under these heads I propose to consider them.

In the text it is asserted, that, *In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.* The phrase, *In the beginning*, is universally expressive, in the Scriptures, of *the commencement of created, or finite existence.* Whether it is intended to be applied in the present case to both the heavens and the earth, with *exactly* the same meaning, is uncertain; as will be evident from the proper import of this phraseology. The word, *created*, denotes, *brought into existence. The heaven and the earth*, is a Jewish phrase, denoting *the Universe and all things which it contains.* As some of these things, particularly the souls of men, were not created at the same time with the earth, it is evident, that the phrase, *in the beginning*, cannot be particularly, and strictly applied to every created being.

In the text, thus explained, the following doctrine is evidently asserted;

THAT ALL THINGS WERE BROUGHT INTO EXISTENCE BY GOD.

The truth of this doctrine has been already sufficiently evinced in the two first of these discourses; so far as arguments from Reason are concerned. That it is the real doctrine of the text; and that the word, *created*, does not mean merely *moulded*, or *fashioned*, is completely evident from the explanation of *Moses* himself; who undoubtedly will be allowed to be his own Commentator. In Gen. ii. 3, he says, *And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work, which God created and made.* In the original language it is, *which God created, to make;* that is, which he created or brought into being, first; and made or fashioned afterwards, into all the innumerable forms and beings, with which the Universe is, in a sense endlessly, replenished.

This truth has by various persons, of no small note in the world, as men of science, been called in question. It seems so evident

that *all things*, which do not involve a contradiction, *are possible with* the Omnipotent *God;* that a sober man can scarcely fail to wonder, how these persons can hesitate to believe, that the act of creating or giving being, is within the limits of his power. The acts of preserving and governing the universe, also seem to be *equally* evidential of Omnipotence, and equally to demand its exertions. I cannot easily conceive how any man can admit, that God governs the Universe, and doubt whether he brought, or was able to bring, it into being. At the same time, the several modes, adopted by these very men to account either for the existence, preservation, or government, of all things, are attended with incomparably more difficulty: being indeed palpable absurdities, and involving evident contradictions. This, it is believed, has been proved in a former discourse.*

But the formation of the human Soul, is itself a continual exhibition of creating power. It is, unquestionably, as difficult to create Minds, as to create Matter. But that God creates Minds is certain; because Matter, being unintelligent, cannot communicate intelligence, and therefore, even if admitted to possess active power, cannot bring into existence a Mind. Nor ought it to be forgotten, that this opinion rests upon no evidence. On the contrary, it is a doubt, or denial, gratuitously assumed. The abettor of it merely doubts, or denies, the fact, that God created all things; and to justify himself, alleges, that *he cannot conceive such an act to be possible.* But he ought to show, that *he does see it to be impossible.* That he cannot discern what Omnipotence can do, any farther than God discloses it, either by his acts, or his declarations, is very obvious; but that this ignorance should be a foundation of doubt to himself; or of conviction, or even of attention, to others; is, I think, explicable only by the supposition of extreme folly in either case.

As this amazing Work is in the text divided into two great parts; *the Heavens*, and *the Earth;* I shall adopt this natural, and pertinent, division in my discourses; I shall begin my consideration of it with the subject, mentioned first in the text, viz. *the Heaven.*

The word *Heaven*, in the text, is used to denote what is elsewhere called *the Heavens;* as is evident from the first verse of the following chapter; in which it is said, with a reference to exactly the same subject, *Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.* As the term is variously applied in the Scriptures; it will be proper in this place to mention the objects, to which this application is made. In the first place, *Heaven, or Heavens*, (for the word is used indifferently in either the singular or plural number) *is applied to God. Until thou know, that the Heavens do rule.* Dan. iv. 26.

2dly. To *Angels. The heavens are not clean in his sight.* Job xv. 15.

* See Sermon II.

3dly. To *the church*. *There was war in heaven.* Rev. xii. 7.

4thly. To *a great height*. *Cities walled up to heaven.* Deut. i. 28.

5thly. To *distinguished glory*. *How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!* Isai. xiv. 12.

All these are plainly figurative senses of this word. In a literal sense, it seems to have been used by the Jews to denote,

1st. *The Air.* As when the Scriptural writers speak of the dew, winds, and fowls, of heaven.

2dly. *The Firmament, or expansion over our heads.* Thus it is said in the context, verse 17, *God set them*, that is, the sun, moon, and stars, *in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth.*

3dly. *The supreme Heaven;* styled also *the Heaven of Heavens. Behold the Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens, is the Lord's.* Deut. x. 14. God also is styled *the God of Heaven;* and St. John *beheld a door opened in Heaven*, and was directed by a voice to go *up thither;* and was *immediately carried in the spirit before the throne of God.*

From these, and many other passages, it is evident, that the *Jews* acknowledged three heavens; and considered all things, beside the earth and that which it contains, and the world of punishment, as being included under the word, *heaven.* As this is the common language of Scripture, I shall consider the subject in the same manner, and in the order already specified.

I. *The Air, or Atmosphere, by which the earth is surrounded, is replete with wonderful displays of the power and wisdom of God.*

Particularly it has ever engaged the attention of wise and observant men, and merits our own attention:

1st. *As it is the immediate mean of life to mankind, and to the animal and vegetable kingdoms.*

The nature of life, and the manner in which it is maintained, are both very imperfectly understood; nor will it be expected from me, that I should here attempt to give an account of such discoveries, as have been made by inquisitive men concerning these mysterious subjects. The remarks of a Minister of the Gospel, and not those of an Anatomist, the views of common sense, and not those of chymical, or medical science, will be expected in the present discussion. All men know, that living beings depend, in this world, for the continuance of life, on respiration; and that the medium of respiration is Air. Among the wonders, which pertain to this subject, this is one; that, although the Air is a compound substance, made up of very diverse materials, one of them noxious, and a second by itself perfectly unproductive of life; yet these are so blended with the third, in which alone the power of maintaining life resides, that in their combination they are better fitted to continue life, than even the life-giving principle would be, if it existed pure and unmixed. Another is, that this combination is maintained in such a manner, that the proportional quantities of these materials are at all times substantially, if not exactly, the

same. When we consider the innumerable revolutions, of which the Air is the subject, and the perpetual fluctuations; it seems scarcely less than a miracle, that this equability, so necessary for the continuance of life, should be always, and every where, preserved. Nothing less than the wisdom of God could have contrived the means, by which this fact is accomplished.

2dly. *As it is the great instrument of dissolution.*

This world is formed to be a theatre of successive existence. The beings which exist in it, are intended to fulfil the end, for which they exist, and then to leave the stage vacant to those, who succeed them. Of course they dissolve; and return to their original dust. Of this dissolution, Air is acknowledged by Philosophers to be the primary means. If we had never been witnesses of the fact; few things could seem more strange and improbable to us, than that the same element should be, at once, the chief means of preserving life, and the chief means of dissolution; and that both these processes should, without any confusion, go on from age to age in perfect harmony, and as indispensable parts of a complete system.

3dly. *As it is a principal mean of heat and cold.*

These great effects are both produced by different operations of the same element, hitherto inexplicably mysterious, but without any discord or confusion. The manner, in which Air withdraws heat from other objects, and again gives it out to those objects, must be confessed, familiar as the fact is, to be eminently wonderful: while, at the same time, the operation is absolutely necessary. On it, depends a great part of the activity, comfort, and usefulness, of mankind. From it, spring in a great degree, those changes of the seasons, those varieties of temperature, which are so pleasing, necessary, and useful, to the world. In a word, from this source, in a great measure, arise the growth and perfection of the vegetable world, the existence of a great part of the comforts and necessaries of life, and apparently the continuance of our being.

4thly. *As it is the medium, by which are conveyed to us rain, dew, hail, and snow; and, as it is, also, the source of drought, in its various degrees.*

The attraction between air and vapour, existing in such a manner as to diffuse the vapour, in a sense equably, throughout the lower regions of the atmosphere, seems to be indispensable to that great and mysterious process in the natural world, which is called evaporation. Every person knows, that without this process, rain and dew, snow and hail, could not exist; and that without these there could be neither vegetation, food, raiment, nor even existence, to mankind. At the same time, by a mysterious process of nature, respecting, especially, a peculiar state of the Atmosphere, the seasons become dry; the *rain*, in the emphatical language of the Scriptures, is changed into *powder and dust; the heavens are as brass over our heads; and the earth as iron under our feet.* Drought

and famine then spread their baleful influence over the world; and mankind are compelled by thousands to the grave.

5thly. *As it is eminently the source of health and sickness.*

Among the various exhalations, accomplished on the surface of the earth by means of the Atmosphere, there are many, which are impure, noxious, and fraught with poison and death. Of this nature, in an eminent degree, is that suffocating vapour, conveyed over the deserts of Nubia in the fatal blast, which is called the Simoon. Of a similar nature, are numerous other exhalations; not so immediately, but often more extensively, destructive, to human life; which arise from marshes, ponds, and other stagnations of water; as well as many more, ascending from decayed vegetables, and other masses of putrefaction. All these, but for the Atmosphere, would be confined to the surface; and fail of their malignant influence on human life. At the same time, Air is the great source of health; and, wherever it passes freely, contributes perhaps to the preservation, or restoration, of this essential blessing. In its purest state, it seems, in the ordinary circumstances of man, to promote health only; and often restores such as are languishing and decayed, more than all other causes united.

6thly. *As it is the seat, and in an important sense, the cause, of many highly magnificent displays of divine workmanship.*

Storms, clouds, thunder, lightning, combustion, volcanoes, earthquakes, the magnificent rainbow, and the delightful breeze, are all dependent on air for their existence. All of them, also, are deeply interesting to man in many ways. Besides their obvious influence in promoting our daily health and comfort, our frequent delight and sorrow, the continuance of our life, and the arrival of death, they are in no small degree interesting to us, as displays of the divine presence and character, eminently beautiful, various, awful, and majestic, and productive of important and extensive moral influence on mankind.

7thly. *As it is in many respects an important aid to Vision.*

No small part of the beautiful, majestic, and interesting scenes of nature depend, for their peculiar appearance, upon the atmosphere. Such, in an eminent manner, is the twilight, which so usefully and beautifully returns, every morning and every evening. Such, also, is the sky, or firmament; that magnificent, azure concave, which apparently bends in so glorious a manner over this great world. Such, also, are all those scenes, in which the refraction of light is concerned. Without the aid of the Atmosphere, none of these things would appear to us at all.

These summary hints will be sufficient to exhibit the importance of this wonderful subject, so far as is necessary for the present design. I proceed therefore to observe,

II. *That the Starry heaven is a still more wonderful, and magnificent, part of the Creation of God.*

To the most uninstructed mind, and the most vulgar eye, the firm-

ament, with the innumerable and glorious bodies which it contains, has ever been far the most wonderful part of the visible creation: while minds of superior intelligence, especially when the subjects of piety, have ever regarded this amazing scene with study, admiration, and awe, as pre-eminently-displaying the wisdom and greatness of God. *When*, says *David*, *I consider the heavens, the work of thy finger, the moon, and the stars, which thou hast ordained; Lord! what is man, that thou art mindful of him; or the son of man, that thou visitest him?*

Of all material objects, the Sun is beyond measure the most glorious and magnificent, and the noblest emblem of its Creator. This great world of light is, beyond every thing else, the most perfect symbol of the exaltation, unchangeableness, perpetuity, life-giving power, benevolent influence, omnipresence, omniscience, dominion, and greatness, of God.

The Moon, a softer, but not less beautiful, object, returns, and communicates to mankind, the light of the Sun in a gentle and delightful manner, exactly suited to the strength of the human eye: an illustrious and most beautiful emblem, in this and several other respects, of the divine REDEEMER of mankind; who, softening the splendour of the Godhead, brings it to the eye of the understanding, in a manner fitted to the strength of the mind; so that without being overwhelmed, or distressed, it can thus behold *the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

The *Stars*, also, by their endless multitude, and their unceasing variety and beauty, with which they every where replenish the vast expansion, astonish, and delight, the mind, while they manifest the greatness and wisdom of Jehovah. No stronger proof can be given of the nature, or degree, of the impressions, with which these marvellous objects have affected the mind of man, than the fact, that in very early ages of the world they began, and through every succeeding period have continued, to be, objects of religious adoration; and by a great proportion of our race, have been directly acknowledged as Gods.

Such have been the views, formed by the human mind, with the mere light of uninstructed reason, concerning this glorious part of the Creation. But, when the eye is permitted to look out of the window of Science into this vast field, it assumes an entirely new, and immensely nobler, character. Instead of a great and splendid luminary, hung up in the heavens to communicate light, and warmth, to this world, and to measure the returns of day and night to its inhabitants, the Sun is seen by the eye of the Astronomer to be a vast world of itself; possessed of the wonderful power of emitting this equally wonderful element in immeasurable quantities to immeasurable distances; and the centre of many other worlds, which receive from this, their light and warmth, their motion, regularity, and harmony. To the same eye, the *planets* no longer appear as gems of inherent and immortal lustre, adorning the con-

cave with unrivalled elegance and beauty; but as vast worlds, resembling this globe in their various affections, and moving round the Sun with a rapid, regular, and mysterious circuit; surrounded by other inferior worlds, by which they are wonderfully beautified and adorned; and inhabited, in all probability, by endless multitudes of beings, rational and immortal. Of these inferior worlds, the Moon is one; and to us, far the most interesting. How many important purposes, which are known, does this beautiful attendant of our earth continually accomplish! How many more, in all probability, which are hitherto unknown, and which hereafter may be extensively disclosed to more enlightened, virtuous, and happy generations of men. At the same time, it is most rationally concluded, that Intelligent beings in great multitudes inhabit her lucid regions, beings probably far better and happier than ourselves.

The Comets, of which the number already discovered is very great, are still more extraordinary parts of this amazing work. Man no longer beholds them as occasional and flaming meteors, wandering through the sky as mere omens to the human race of convulsions, famines, and pestilences; but sees them, with unquestionable certainty, to be worlds, which, like the planets, regularly move round the Sun in orbits of extreme eccentricity and inconceivable extent.

Concerning *the Stars* our views have undergone a still greater change. The mind no more regards them as feeble but beautiful tapers, twinkling, merely for the gratification of mankind, with an innate and perpetual lustre. On the contrary, they are known, with absolute certainty, to be universally Suns, resembling our own; and apparently so much less, only because they are removed to a distance incomprehensibly greater. The same science, which has detected their nature, size, and distance, has also to a great extent disclosed their numbers. Instead of the comparatively small collection, visible to the naked eye in any given night, they are proved to be in a sense innumerable, and to fill with an immense army the immeasurable fields of Ether.

It cannot be rationally believed, that worlds so great and glorious, as the Sun, were made in vain. Yet of the endless millions of stars, less than three thousand have been seen by the naked eye of man; and, till within a few years, all the vast multitudes, which have been since discovered, had been secreted from every inhabitant of this globe. *Herschell* first detected almost all, which are now known, or have ever been visible to the human eye. So far as mankind are concerned, then, the stars, ever since the Creation, have, in far the greatest number of instances, existed in vain. Of course, they were formed for other purposes, than any, in which we can be directly concerned. But for what purposes can we suppose such worlds of light were created? The only rational answer is, They were formed for the same purposes, which are accomplished by our own Sun; to give light, and motion, and life.

and comfort, to systems of worlds, of which each star severally, is the common centre. Such worlds, therefore, are with the highest reason supposed to exist; and to be, like the earth, the residence of Intelligent beings, of incalculable numbers, and endless diversities of character; all supported, governed, and blessed, as the worlds, which they inhabit, are sustained, regulated, and moved, by the hand of that Almighty Being, who created them, and *whose kingdom ruleth over all.* Thus the universe is the immense and glorious empire of JEHOVAH; an empire formed of Suns and systems; the families, cities, and provinces, of the vast kingdom, ruled by him, *who telleth the number of the Stars, and calleth them all by their names.*

III. *The Heaven of Heavens is a still more edifying object of our attention.*

On this sublime subject I shall discourse only in a very summary manner, at the present time, as I expect, God willing, to consider it more extensively at a future period.

The high superiority of this happy and glorious world is strongly marked in the Scriptures, whence alone we derive any knowledge of it, by that peculiar epithet, *The Heaven of Heavens.* As *the God of Gods* is distinguished by this phrase above all *other Gods*, so the *Heaven of Heavens* is, in a manner indefinitely similar, intentionally exhibited as wholly superior to all *other Heavens.* In the same Scriptures, we are taught, that this glorious world is *the house of God;* or the peculiar and favourite place of his residence; the place, where those manifestations of himself are seen, which he is pleased to make, as the most especial displays of his presence and character. Present in all other places, he is peculiarly present here.

It is also, as we are further informed by the same Scriptures, *the throne of God;* the seat of universal and endless dominion; where the divine authority is peculiarly exercised, and made known, and the splendour of the divine government exhibited with singular effulgence and glory.

It is *the residence of his most favoured creatures;* of the saints, who are redeemed by the blood of his Son; and of *the Angels*, who, innumerable in multitude, *stand round about his throne.*

It is the *everlasting seat of consummate holiness*, or *virtue;* where that divine principle shines without alloy, flourishes in immortal youth, and reigns, and triumphs, with eternal glory.

It is *the place, in which are seen all the finishings of divine workmanship:* and in which the beauty and greatness of the Infinite Mind, and the endless diversities of Omniscient skill, appear in all their most exquisite forms, and in the last degrees of refinement and perfection.

It is the *centre of all divine communications;* the city, in which all the paths of Providence terminate; the ocean, from which all the streams of infinite wisdom and goodness proceed, and into which they return, to flow again, and for ever.

It is *the theatre, in which an eternal providence of progressive knowledge, power, and love*, rendered daily more and more beautiful and amiable, wonderful and majestic, *is begun, and carried on* through ages, which will never approach towards an end.

It is *the place, where all the works of God are studied, and understood, through an eternal progress of knowledge;* where all the diversities of virtuous Intelligence, all the forms and hues of Moral Beauty, brighten in an unceasing gradation; and where gratitude, love, enjoyment, and praise, resound day and night, in a more and more perfect harmony throughout the immense of duration.

Thus have I finished the observations, which I designed to make on this subject; and shall now conclude the discourse with some practical

REMARKS.

1st. *With what entire propriety is God exhibited in the very first verse of the Scriptures, as the Creator of all things!*

This verse may be regarded as an introduction, or preface, to the whole Bible, and to the system of doctrines which it contains. Accordingly it announces to us in few and simple, but those most sublime and affecting, terms, the two great subjects, about which the Bible and its doctrines are employed: *God, and his immense kingdom.* Him it exhibits to us in the character of Creator, and all things else as created by him.

On the act of creating is founded a great part of that character, in which especially he calls for the obedience of Intelligent beings. As the Creator of the Universe, he appears irresistibly to every eye, as a being possessed of infinite power, wisdom, and greatness; and therefore able to preserve, and govern, the vast work, which he was thus able to make; of power, which nothing can resist, or escape; of wisdom, which nothing can circumvent, or elude; and of greatness, with which nothing can be compared. As the Creator of the Universe, he is exhibited as the absolute Proprietor of the work, which he has made. Creation is the highest ground of property, which can exist. All is his; and his, in a sense superior to that, in which any thing can be ours. All, therefore, is rightfully required to be employed supremely and solely in his service, for his purposes, and according to his pleasure.

Intelligent creatures, particularly, have no property in any thing, except as he has given it; and on no terms, and for no uses, beside those which he has established. They themselves are as absolutely his property, as any thing which he has made. Their faculties, and their time, are as truly his: for they were made by him, and therefore are not their own. Of course, they are justly required by *him*, and ought to be devoted by themselves, to whatever services he is pleased to enjoin. Of course, also, to refuse, or neglect, to render to him themselves, and whatever they do, or possess, is plain and gross injustice, and refusing, or neglecting to *render to God the things which are God's.*

By his character of Creator, also, they are called upon, in the most solemn and affecting manner, to regard him with unceasing admiration, reverence, and awe. There is something singularly awful, something singularly fitted to inspire profound reverence, in the character of God, as our Creator; in the consideration of him, as the Being, by whom we were made. On this Being, we cannot but feel, if we feel at all, that, as we derived our existence from him, so we absolutely depend for our continuance in being, and for all which can render that being comfortable or desirable. In this view, we can scarcely fail to realize, that *we* are nothing, and that *He* is all.

At the same time, the amazing nature of the works themselves, their number, their variety, their beauty, their grandeur, their magnificence, the glory of the end for which they are made, and the astonishing fitness of the means by which it is accomplished, necessarily excite in every sober and contemplative mind the highest possible admiration; an admiration, which will continue, and increase, for ever.

2dly. *With what reason does God, as the Creator of all things, claim the entire Confidence of his creatures?*

He, who is the Author of the Creation, can do all things; is every where; knows every thing; and controls the Universe with an absolute and irresistible dominion. He, who has made such various, rich, and abundant provision for the wants of his creatures, can provide for all their wants. He, who was willing to provide in the bountiful manner, which we actually see existing, is reasonably argued, and expected, to provide all other things, which are either necessary or useful. If they please him, he cannot but be expected to give to them freely; if they obey him, they will certainly please him; and if they are willing to do that, which their own minds, candidly employed, and enlightened by his Word, must of course declare to be right, they will certainly obey him. The path, therefore, which leads to the most ample supplies of all their real wants, and the attainment of all real good, is open, direct, and certain. Nor can any reason be given, why they should refuse, or neglect, to pursue this highway to the divine and eternal possession. How rich, how vast, how glorious a work is the visible creation! With what endless multitudes of creatures is it replenished! With what innumerable blessings is it stored! All these sprang from the mere goodness and bounty of the Creator. Who can limit such bounty, even in thought? Who can imagine a real want, which it is not able, and willing, to supply? How plainly, then, ought *all* those *creatures*, not only to *wait on him*, but to trust in him also, that *he* may *give them* all blessings *in due season!*

Particularly, when his children remember, that he has created the Heaven of Heavens for their reception, and adorned and enriched it with every thing, which can contribute to their happiness and glory; they cannot but discern, and feel, that he claims from

them, on the most solid grounds, all possible confidence, as well as reverence and love. In the Scriptures, he has disclosed to them, that here there is made all the provision, which they can need, and far more than they can ask, or conceive; and that, however enlarged may be their faculties and views, they will through eternity receive all, which they can ever desire. Of the power of God to fulfil these promises they are completely assured by the effects, which it has produced in the visible Creation. Of his willingness to perform them, and to satisfy every reasonable wish, they are furnished with no unhappy evidence, in the provision, which he so bountifully makes for rebels and apostates, in the present world. When they add to this the gift of his own Son, whom *he did not spare, but delivered him up for us all;* they are completely assured that *he will also with him freely give them all things.*

3dly. *How amazing and glorious a Being does God appear in the character of Creator!*

Of what power, knowledge, and goodness, must He be possessed, who has done all these things; who is, who lives, and who acts, through all the worlds in immensity; who contrived them, and brought them into being; who stored them with such abundant furniture, and filled them with such multitudes of inhabitants; who controls them with an omnipotent hand, and with an omniscient eye; and who will advance them for ever in their progress towards perfection! All these things are only displays of the Godhead. In them all, JEHOVAH is seen in forms of beauty, wisdom, goodness, life, joy, loveliness, and greatness, which transcend both number and comprehension.

4thly *How ought this great and awful Being to be feared by his Intelligent creatures!*

How ought *we*, particularly, to realize his presence, agency, character, and will, the obligations which we are under to obey, and the supreme interest which we have in doing, his pleasure! His right to dispose of us cannot be denied. The rectitude of his pleasure cannot be questioned. At the same time, on him our all depends. How indispensable is it, therefore, that we act in all things, in such a manner, as to secure his favour, and, in this, the only possible manner, to obtain his blessing.

On the contrary, what madness must it be to forget, disobey, and provoke him! Think what it is to *be found fighting against God. Hast thou*, says JEHOVAH to *Job, an arm like God; or canst thou thunder with a voice like him? Then I will confess unto thee, that thine own right hand can save thee.* What evil is not to be expected from his anger? What terrible proofs have been given of its dreadful efficacy, in his ancient dispensations to the *Antediluvians, to Sodom and Gomorrah, to the Egyptians*, and to the *Israelites*, both in the wilderness, and the land of *Canaan!* What awful specimens are even now continually seen of his displeasure against this pol-

luted world, in the ravages of the storm, the earthquake, and the volcano, and the more extensive evils of pestilence and famine!

5thly. *How miserable must be the condition of those, who have no interest in the favour of God!*

God is the source of all the good, which is found, or will ever be found, in the Universe. *Every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above; and cometh down from the* FATHER *of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.* Wherever, then, he refuses to give, it is certain, that no enjoyment can be found. How dreadful, of course, how solitary, how friendless, how forlorn, must the situation of a creature be, if he were banished for ever from the presence, favour, and love, of God! Were the Sun, as the Heathen supposed, an intelligent being, capable of being pleased or displeased, and of communicating and withholding his light and warmth at pleasure; how lonely, dark, and wretched, would be the condition of men, if he should withdraw his beams from this world, and permit them never more to shine! of men consigned to everlasting night, and everlasting winter; who should yet *live*, in this cold and dreary solitude, and know, and feel, their wretched condition: while at the same time they also knew, that other favoured and happy beings, in all other respects resembling themselves, were in full possession of the life-giving influence, and cheering splendour, of this glorious luminary. God is the Sun of the intelligent and immortal world. Wherever he shines, there is light, and peace, and hope, and joy: wherever he withdraws his beams, all is darkness and desolation for ever.

On this subject, I am apprehensive, that Christians do not meditate, nor converse, nor Ministers preach, so frequently and so fervently, as their interest, and their duty, plainly require. The Apostles have dwelt often, and extensively, on the prospects, the joys, and the glories, of Heaven. In this respect they are obviously patterns to all succeeding Preachers. Christians are in the Scriptures often invited to meditate on heavenly things; and presented with the most sublime, alluring, and delightful, objects of a heavenly nature, to engage them in such meditations. They are directed, also, to *set their affections on things above;* commanded to have *their conversation in heaven, and not on the earth;* and reminded that in a humble and figurative sense, they are already *come to the New Jerusalem*, and to the glorious beings by whom it is inhabited, by entering the Church of God in the present world. All these precepts they are bound implicitly to obey.

When we approach the table of Christ, we are by the strongest motives compelled to remember, that the exalted end of his Mediation was to open this happy world for the reception of his followers; an end, purchased with tears, and blood. This end is the most illustrious, and delightful, of which we can form a conception: And the means, by which it has been accomplished, are the most

sublime display of infinite good-will, which the Universe has ever beheld.

When Christians approach the table of their communion, they approach it, to commemorate their Saviour. What do they commemorate? His life, and death, and resurrection, and exaltation: a life of humiliation, suffering, and sorrow; a death of shame, and agony; a resurrection to endless life; an exaltation to infinite glory. Whither has he gone? To Heaven. Whither are *they* going? To the same happy world. *In my Father's house*, said this Divine Person, as he was advancing near to the grave, *are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go, and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.* Can Christians, then, fail to look often to that delightful world, where their Saviour dwells, and where they are all finally to be assembled in his presence? Will not the remembrance of the *fulness of joy, the pleasures* which flow *for ever* in this region of Immortality, awaken in the most ardent manner, their admiration, their love, their gratitude, and their praise, to Him, who formed it in the beginning; who stored it with glory, life, and joy; who ascended the cross, that he might open its everlasting doors, for their admission to its infinite blessings.

To enhance all these views and affections, let them remember also, that in the same wonderful manner he redeemed them from the deplorable character of sin, and the miseries of perdition. That Divine Spirit, who *renews* them *in righteousness, and true holiness, unto every good work*, entered upon this benevolent office, only in consequence of the Mediation of Christ. But for this Mediation, no child of *Adam* would ever have been renewed. Sin unmingled, unrestrained, and endless, would have prevailed throughout all the nations of men, and all the ages of time. The way to Heaven would have been unknown. The only path from this world would have gone down to the chambers of death.

In how interesting a manner, then, is heaven now brought before our eyes, as the end of the great sacrifice of the Cross! Here Christ dies again, in a figure pre-eminently affecting; and shows us his broken body, and bleeding wounds, as the price which he paid to procure for us an inheritance in the kingdom prepared for his followers before the foundations of the world. No other hand could have opened the gates of life. No other Atonement could have expiated our sins. No other means could have procured the sanctification of our Souls by the Spirit of grace; and thus fitted us to enjoy the blessings of heaven, and made them blessings to us. But for him, the best of men would have gone down to the world of wo. By him, every good man will be raised to *the glory, which he had with the Father before ever the world was.*

SERMON XVIII.

CREATION.—ANGELS.

COLOSSIANS i. 16.—*For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be Thrones, or Dominions, or Principalities, or Powers: all things were created by him and for him.*

IN my last discourse, I began the examination of *the works of God*, with some considerations on *the Heavens*. I shall now pursue the same subject, in several observations concerning *those beings, who were originally inhabitants of the highest heavens.*

As all our knowledge concerning this subject is derived from the Scriptures, I shall confine myself in this discussion to the information, which they communicate; reserving such views, as Reason has been able to form of it, to the discourse, which I propose to devote to a consideration of *the existence and character of Fallen Angels.*

In the text it is asserted, *that Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, and Powers;* names, which are fairly supposed to denote different orders of the Angelic host, and to indicate, in the words of St. Paul, *things in heaven; were created by Jesus Christ*, for his own use and purposes. Among other things, conveyed to us by this assertion, the following Doctrine is evidently one:

That the Angels are a part of the Creation of God.

It is a fact worthy of observation, that the Scriptures teach us scarcely any thing concerning any of the worlds, included under the general name of *heavens*, except the supreme Heaven. The reason is, I think, not difficult to be divined. With other heavenly worlds, we have no direct concern. Whatever knowledge, therefore, we might be supposed to attain about them, or their inhabitants, would be a mere gratification of curiosity, and incapable of being directed to any valuable end. Under the influence of this powerful principle, we should in all probability have been led away by such communications, if they had been made, from those things, which we need, and ought, to know. Few affections of the human mind have more influence over its conduct, than curiosity. Well-directed, and carefully kept within proper bounds, it is eminently profitable to man, by prompting him unceasingly to useful inquiries, and improvements in knowledge; but, when suffered to wander without restraint, it conducts to mere gratification, and demands the soul of real good.

But with *the Heaven of Heavens*, we have a continual and most important concern. This glorious and delightful world is the place, to which all our ultimate views are directed by our Maker;

the home, to which he invites us to look, as our final rest from every trouble; and the final seat of all the enjoyment, which we are capable of attaining. With its inhabitants, we shall, if we are wise, become familiarly acquainted, and intimately united; and shall live in the midst of them, through ages which cannot end. Of this world, therefore, and those who dwell in it, we need information, various and extensive. Accordingly, God has in the Scriptures, to a considerable extent, opened heaven to our view; and furnished us, in many particulars, with an account of the happy beings, who inhabit it; of *the Rank, or Station, which they hold in his great kingdom; the Attributes, of which they are possessed; and the Employments, to which they are devoted.* Under these three heads, I propose to consider them, at the present time. To an audience, possessed of so many advantages for estimating the comparative importance of subjects of contemplation, and particularly the comparative worth of Intelligent beings, it is reasonably hoped, that a subject of such inherent dignity cannot be indifferent. Especially, as this subject is scarcely at all introduced into the Desk, and is but too unfrequently, a topic of private contemplation; and, as it will of course have in some degree the advantage of novelty, as well as of nobleness; it ought to be expected to gain, at least, the transient attention, which such a discussion demands.

That Angels are the beings, intended by the phraseology of the text, will not be questioned. The four titles, by which they are here denoted, probably indicate four different orders of these heavenly beings; or, perhaps, may be used as a general representation of all the orders, into which they are divided. Beside the general name *of Angels*, or *Messengers*, derived from their peculiar employment, they are called in the Scriptures by the following: Θρονοι, *Thrones;* Κυριοτητες, *Dominions;* Αρχαι, *Principalities, or Governments;* Δυναμεις, *Powers;* Εξουσιαι, *Authorities;* Ζωα, *Living Ones; Cherubim, Knowing Ones, or those in whom is fulness of knowledge; Seraphim, or burning ones; Elohim, Gods;* beside the name of *Princes*, used by the Angel in Dan. x. 13, and probably equivalent to one of the five first appellations. All these names, as will be evident to the slightest attention, are plainly, and strongly, significant of their great importance. With the greatest probability, however, they are names, very imperfectly descriptive of their natures; although, without a doubt, they are the most suitable which human language contains. As words are, of necessity, expressive of such ideas as those who use them possess; and as men, from a want of correspondence with Angels, have no direct, or original, ideas, concerning them; it is plain, that all words, chosen from human language, to describe the nature of these celestial beings, must exhibit them very inadequately and imperfectly. Still, these names are very forcible declarations of their supreme distinction among created Intelligences, and the important character, which they hold in the Universe.

It is scarcely necessary to remark, that the names given to Angels in the text, are used metonymically: the adjunct being all along chosen to denote the subject; or the thing possessed, the possessor. Thus *Thrones* are substituted for those *who sit on them; Dominions and Principalities*, for those who hold them; and *Powers and Authorities*, for those by whom they are exercised.

It ought to be observed, that Angels are also called *Morning Stars*, to denote their peculiar beauty and splendour of character; and not improbably as Harbingers of Christ, *the* SUN *of Righteousness:* and *Sons of God*, to teach us, that they are nearly connected with the Creator, dwell in his house as children, and enjoy his parental presence, care, and love.

From all these observations, united, it is evident, that Angels are possessed of pre-eminent dignity, importance, and distinction, in the divine kingdom: since all these names are given to them by God himself; and are used, therefore, to indicate their true and proper character. This character I shall now attempt summarily to exhibit, as it is presented to us by the Scriptures; and according to the scheme of discourse, which has been already mentioned.

I. *Angels are the highest order of Intelligent creatures.*

The truth of this assertion is manifest, from a consideration of the *several names* given to them in the text, and in other parts of the Scriptures. As these names respect the kingdom of God at large, without a limitation to any particular part of that kingdom; so they are to be understood, as being Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, and Powers, in the immense and eternal empire of JEHOVAH. Angels, therefore, who are called by these names, are the beings who, under GOD, the supreme Ruler, hold, throughout his dominion, authority and power. All other finite beings are, therefore, beneath them in dignity, and subordinate to them in station.

The same truth is also completely evident from the place assigned them for their residence. *I am Gabriel*, said the Angel, who appeared to *Zachariah* in the temple; *I am Gabriel, who stand in the presence of God. And before the throne*, says *St. John, there was a sea of glass, like unto chrystal; and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four Living Ones, full of eyes before and behind. And they rest not, day and night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to come!* Rev. iv. 6, 8. And again, Rev. vii. 11, *All the Angels stood round about the throne, and worshipped God, saying, Amen. In the year that King Uzziah died*, says the Prophet *Isaiah, I saw also* JEHOVAH *sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the Seraphim; each one had six wings; and one cried to another, and said, Holy, Holy, Holy, is* JEHOVAH *of Hosts! the whole earth is full of his glory.* In the same manner, is the same subject exhibited to us, and with a sublimity not inferior, by the Prophet *Ezekiel*, concerning the

Cherubim; and by the Prophet *Daniel*, concerning the myriads of the heavenly host. Angels, then, surround the throne of God, stand in his immediate and awful presence, and worship continually at his feet. What beings, let me ask, can we rationally suppose would be admitted to a communion so intimate with their Creator, an access to him so near, a distinction so wonderful? To this there can be but one answer. Every man will without hesitation say, "None, but those who sustain the first character, and the highest station among created beings."

Nor is the same truth much less evident from the glory and splendour, with which these celestial beings have customarily appeared in the present world. When the Angel came *to roll away the stone from the sepulchre* of Christ, *his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow; and for fear of him, the keepers became as dead men. And I saw*, says *St. John*, *another mighty Angel come down from Heaven, clothed with a cloud; and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the Sun, and his feet as pillars of fire.* All these circumstances of splendour, greatness, and awfulness, surrounded these illustrious beings, while employed as the Ministers of God in executing *his* commands. They were, therefore, the proper emblems of their character, and the proper accompaniments of their station. But we cannot be at a loss concerning the suitableness of these circumstances to beings of a character and station, superior to every created thing, which we are able to conceive. Beings, of whom this is the ordinary dress, and characteristical splendour, must undoubtedly be exalted above all others, hitherto supposed by the mind of man.

II. *Angels are endowed with the noblest created Attributes.*

They are endowed,

1st. *With wonderful Power.*

This perfection of Angels is forcibly indicated by the fact, that the name *Power*, or *Might*, is in several places given to them in the Gospel. No stronger testimony of their high possession of this attribute can be conveyed by a single word; for it is a direct declaration that their nature is *power itself*. In Psalm ciii. 20, *David* exclaims, *Bless the Lord, ye his Angels, who excel in strength. A strong Angel*, and *a mighty Angel*, are also phrases in the Apocalypse, expressive of the same character.

Proofs of the Power, with which these exalted beings are endowed, and of the amplest kind, are in several instances recorded in the Scriptures. An Angel destroyed, in three days, threescore and ten thousand persons out of *Judah* and *Israel*, in consequence of the sin of *David* in numbering the people. An Angel destroyed, in one night, of the army of *Sennacherib*, an hundred fourscore and five thousand men. Angels also are exhibited in the Revelation of *St. John*, as holding the four winds of Heaven; and as executing in a long succession, the judgments of God upon this evil world, with a series of efforts, demanding power utterly incomprehensible by

us. In the twentieth chapter of this book, particularly, one of them is exhibited as binding that fierce and strong Spirit, *the Prince of the power of the air*, who has so extensively and dreadfully distressed this unhappy world; as *casting him into the bottomless pit;* and *as setting a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be fulfilled.* In all these instances, Angels are exhibited as endowed with might, to which other Intelligent creatures can make no pretensions, and of which men cannot even form any adequate conception.

2dly. *Angels are also possessed of Activity equally wonderful.*

In Psalm civ. 4, quoted Hebrews i. 7, their nature, in this particular, is summarily described in this remarkable declaration: *Who maketh his Angels spirits, and his Ministers a flaming fire.* The word here rendered *spirits* most usually signifies *winds.* In either sense, the phraseology forcibly declares the eminent activity of the beings described by it, who are thus represented as moving with the swiftness of winds, or spirits, and operating with the astonishing energy of flaming fire.

The same doctrine is also emphatically taught in the frequent attribution of *many wings* to the *Cherubim*, *Seraphim*, and other orders of Angels. This, we know, is a representation merely symbolical; and the language of the symbol cannot be misconstrued.

But the following story, in the Prophet *Daniel*, exhibits this doctrine with unrivalled force; and will preclude the necessity of any further illustration. Chapter ix. verse 3, and 20—23. *And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplication, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes. And while I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin, and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God, for the holy mountain of my God; Yea, while I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications, the commandment came forth; and I am come to show thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.*

From this remarkable story, we learn, that some time in the day, *Daniel set himself to seek the Lord in fasting and prayer;* that, after his prayer was begun, *the commandment* was given to *Gabriel* to explain to him the vision and the prophecy. In verses 20 and 21, we are told, that *Gabriel* came to him, while he was speaking; that this was his evening prayer; and that during the time, in which he was employed in uttering his prayer, *Gabriel* came from the supreme Heaven to this world. This is a rapidity exceeding all the comprehension of the most active imagination; surpassing, beyond any comparison, the amazing swiftness of light. Light, we know, is several years in coming from such fixed stars, as are

visible to the eye of man. But there is the best reason to believe, that the Heaven of Heavens is at a much greater distance than those stars; so as, not improbably, to be a Heaven to them, as the starry firmament is to us. The Poet, therefore, is justified by this wonderful fact in that forcible expression,

"The speed of Gods, (Angels) time counts not."

No stronger exhibition can be asked, or given, of the activity of these celestial beings.

3dly. *Angels are endued with unfading and immortal Youth.*

Of this doctrine, we have many most decisive testimonies in the Scriptures. Particularly, it is beautifully exhibited in the name Ζωα, *Living Ones*, given them by *St. John* in the Apocalypse, and by *Ezekiel* in the first Chapter, and several other parts of his prophecy. By this name, we are taught, that life is the proper nature, a pre-eminent and glorious characteristic, of Angels; life in a peculiar and distinguishing degree; the most perfect manifestation of that quickening energy, which Christ attributes to the Father, and challenges to himself, as an exclusive, appropriate, and wonderful, attribute of the Godhead.

The same doctrine is also beautifully exemplified in the Angels, who appeared to *Mary*, in the tomb of our Saviour. These illustrious persons were then, at the least, four thousand years old. Still they appeared as young men; and in all that long succession of ages had undergone no decay. Their youth, a bright and beautiful blossom, still shone with all its lustre, and fragrance; and directly indicated, that it was superior both to accident and time; and would, after many such flights of years, survive in all its vigour; being destined, as well as fitted, for immortality. Even this is probably an imperfect representation of this glorious subject. The youth of Angels is, like their other attributes, formed to refine, improve, and brighten for ever.

4thly. *Angels are endowed with the greatest Intellectual Faculties, and are of course possessed of Knowledge, superior to that of any other created beings.*

This character of these heavenly inhabitants is presented to us in the Scriptures in many forms. *The Living Ones*, mentioned by the Apostle *John*, in the book of Revelation, are declared to have been *full of eyes within;* that is, to have been all sense, all intellect, all consciousness; turning their attention every way; beholding at once all things within the reach of their understanding; and discerning them with a clearness of perception, which is the most perfect created semblance of the intuitive, and boundless, views of the Omniscient Mind.

The face, also, *of a Man*, attributed to one of these illustrious beings by *St. John*, and to all those, who appeared to *Ezekiel*, by that prophet, is another ascription of this character to Angels. The face of Man was, among the Jews and other eastern nations

the standing symbol of *Intelligence;* and denotes, here, the superior possession of this attribute by those, to whom it is ascribed.

Angels were originally formed with an entire freedom from sin, the only source of prejudice, and the chief source of error. Their faculties were, at first, such as become *the Morning stars* of the highest Heavens; *the Sons of God*, intended to surround the throne of JEHOVAH, and to hold the chief places of power, distinction, and glory, in his eternal kingdom. They were such, as to become those, to whom, in the beginning,* was given by God himself the name *Cherub*, or *fulness of knowledge*. They were such, in a word, as to become their other transcendent attributes of power, youth, and activity; and the exalted stations, which they were destined to fill for ever.

With the nature, and extent, of their faculties, has the place of their residence in this respect exactly accorded. They have ever dwelt in the world, where truth reigns without opposition; where knowledge is the universal state and character; where all mysteries are continually disclosed; and where the nature and propriety of both the means, and the ends, of providence are, more than in any part of the universe, unfolded. There, *day and night* for six thousand years, they have been unceasingly employed in studying the works of God. Weariness and decay they know not. Strength of understanding in them is incapable of being impaired. Every object of investigation is to them delightful; and every faculty, by its nature, susceptible of improvement. What, then, must be the extent of their attainments at the present time?

Beyond this, the favour of God is extended to them in a degree, incomprehensible by such minds as ours. To communicate just, and extensive, views of his works to these glorious beings, is declared to be his especial *intent* in *the creation of all things by Jesus Christ;*† and peculiarly *his manifold wisdom* in his dispensations to *the Church*. No communication on his part, and no attainment on theirs, can be imagined too great for this divine purpose, or the goodness by which it was formed.

In Matthew xxiv. 36, our Saviour declares, that *of that day*, viz. the day of his coming to the destruction of Jerusalem, *knoweth no one, not even the Angels of heaven*. This appeal, if we understand the passage in the common acceptation, can have force, and pertinence, only on the supposition, that nothing, which is known, of the works and ways of God, is hidden from Angels; and is, therefore, a complete proof of the entire superiority of their intellectual nature, and attainments, to those of any other created being.

5thly. *Angels are possessed of consummate Holiness.*

The evidence of this truth is so multiform, and so abundant, in the Scriptures, that no particular proof, or illustration, seems to be necessary. Their joy and praise at the Creation, their divine trans-

* See Gen. iii. 24. † See Eph. iii. 9, 10.

port at the birth of the Redeemer and the union of *glory to God in the highest, and good-will towards men*, disclosed by that wonderful event, and their noble and disinterested exultation in the repentance of ruined sinners, are all sublime manifestations of the unalloyed holiness, of the pre-eminent beauty of mind, possessed by this dignified order of beings. The name *Seraphim*, or *burning ones*, is also, a most forcible representation of this exalted character. In this name, the mind of an angel is exhibited as enkindled with one intense and eternal flame of divine love, burning with a clear, unceasing, perpetual ardency and splendour. Such a love, we cannot but see, is entirely suited to the character of those, who *stand before God*, dwell in his house, enjoy his favour, and exercise the glorious offices of his kingdom. In accordance with this character, the four *Living Ones*, who are exhibited as Representatives of the Angelic host in the heavens, manifest their exalted love to the great Author of their blessings, by celebrating, with an unceasing voice, his infinite holiness and excellency, throughout the never-ending progress of their being. In this glorious employment, also, all the innumerable company of Angels are declared to unite with them, to be animated by the same perfect character, and to harmonize with them in their hearts, as well as in their songs.

REMARKS.

1st. *How delightful an object of contemplation is this glorious Order of beings!*

All things, pertaining to this illustrious subject, are cheering, luminous, animating, and sublime. The very names, assigned to Angels by their Creator, convey to us ideas pre-eminently pleasing, fitted to captivate the heart, and exalt the imagination; ideas only cheerful, refined, and noble; ideas, which dispel gloom, banish despondency, enliven hope, and awaken sincere and unmingled joy. They are *Living Ones;* beings, in whom life is inherent and instinctive; who sprang up under the quickening influence of the Sun of Righteousness, beneath the morning of everlasting day; who rose, expanded, and blossomed, in the uncreated beam, on the banks of the river of life, and were nourished by the waters of immortality. They are *Spirits;* winged with activity, and informed with power, which no labour wearies, and no duration impairs: their faculties always fresh and young; their exertions unceasing and wonderful; and their destination noble and delightful, without example, and without end. They are *Burning Ones*, glowing with a pure and serene, an intense and immortal, flame of divine love; returning, without ceasing, the light and warmth, which they have received from the great central Sun of the Universe; reflecting with supreme beauty the image of that divine Luminary; and universally glorious, although *differing* from each other *in glory*.

The place, in which they dwell, is perfectly suited to their illustrious character. It is no other than the Heaven of Heavens;

the first and best world, that will ever be created; the place, where God himself delights peculiarly to dwell; the house, where virtue, peace, and joy, dwelt in the beginning, and will dwell for ever; the throne of boundless dominion; the parent city of the great empire of JEHOVAH; the happy region, where all things are verdant with life, and blossom with immortality.

The Station, which they hold, is of the same cheerful and elevated nature. It is the first station, allotted to created existence. These sublime Intelligences, are the immediate attendants of JEHOVAH; the nobles and princes of the Universe. All their employments, all their allotments, are honourable and happy; all their destiny, dignified and divine.

Angels, then, present us with an object of contemplation, replenished with inherent light, beauty, and greatness, with nothing to tarnish, nothing to impair, its lustre; nothing to alloy the pleasure of the beholder: a vivid landscape, formed of all the fine varieties of novelty and greatness, without one misshapen, decayed, or lifeless object, to lessen its perfection: a morning of the spring, without a cloud to overcast it: a sun, without a spot, shining only with the various colours of unmingled light.

When we cast our eyes on this charming and transporting scene, we instinctively ask, What is the source of this unrivalled assemblage, this unmixed group of objects so delightful? The answer is at hand. Holiness is the well-spring, whence all these streams of beauty and pleasure are derived. If a single doubt arises in our minds concerning this truth, it may be removed in a moment. *Fallen Angels* were once possessed of all these illustrious attributes, and held the exalted station, which is now exclusively enjoyed by their fellows. Fallen Angels are still possessed in an eminent degree of power, life, activity, and knowledge; but they yielded up their holiness, when they revolted from their Maker; and changed for ever their character, and their destiny, by sinning against God. Sin converted them into Fiends, and made Hell their habitation. From Sin, that dark and dreadful word derives all its gloom, sorrow, and despair. Sin ushered it into being; raised its prison walls; barred its iron gates; shrouded its desolate regions in the blackness of darkness; kindled the fires, by which it is gloomily enlightened, and awakened all the cries, and groans, and curses, and blasphemies, which echo through its regions of sorrow. Sin changed Angels, once surrounding the throne, and harmonizing in the praise of God, into liars, accusers, calumniators, adversaries, and destroyers. How amazing and dreadful the change! How loathsome, how detestable, the spirit, by which it was accomplished!

2dly. *How different from these glorious and unspotted beings are Men!*

Numerous are the ways, in which we may, if we please, derive instruction, improvement, and delight, from the contemplation of

this illustrious race of beings. A comparison of ourselves with them, and of our circumstances with theirs, will particularly teach us our own littleness and depravity; and happily, as well as naturally, prepare us for humility and reformation.

Man is of the lowest order of Intelligent beings; kindred to animals; often raised very little above their level; possessed in the humblest degree of rational attributes; the subject of extreme weakness, sluggishness, and ignorance; hastening with a rapid tendency to decay, old age, and death; without love to God, or his fellow-men; depraved throughout with sin; and voluntarily yielded by himself to final perdition.

What an affecting contrast is here presented to our view! Angels so great, virtuous, and happy: Man so little, sinful, and miserable. How deeply humbled ought we to be by the sight of this picture, presenting so just, as well as forcible, a delineation of our real character! How ashamed ought we to be of our impiety, deceit, injustice, unkindness, pride, and vanity! For in this humble state, we are vain: possessed of this guilty character, we are proud. Of what are we proud? Of what are we vain? Of our sin, our disgrace, our folly, our frailty, our diseases, or our death? What beside these things can we find to excite our pride?

Yet we are proud and vain: wonderfully proud; deplorably vain. We are proud of a body fattening for worms, and pampered for corruption and the grave; of clothes, which we borrow from the sheep and the silk-worm; of endowments, given us by God; of wealth, amassed by fraud and avarice; and of stations, conferred by base favouritism, and popular frenzy. Nay, we are proud of profaneness, cursing, and blasphemy. We boast of bargains, made only by the cunning of fraud, or the violence of oppression. We glory in the infernal arts and infamous success of seduction. We murder our fellow-creatures in duels, and wreathe our temples with garlands dyed in blood. We slaughter thousands and millions in war; plant laurels amid the bones, and nourish them with the blood, of those, whom we have destroyed. We raise our thrones on the cemetery of buried nations; and mistake the groans and shrieks of surviving parents, widows, and orphans, for the trumpet of Fame. In a word, all that ought to humble us in the dust, all that ought to clothe us in sackcloth, and cover us with ashes, all that blackens us with disgrace and guilt, all that makes us deformed and loathsome in the sight of God, is converted by us into the means of pride and exultation!

Angels, although so greatly exalted above men, are neither proud, nor vain. The plain reason is, they are not sinful. Pride and Vanity are derived from sin only; or rather sin is *the root* and stem, *of bitterness*, of which they are the branches. To be proud, or vain, then, is not to resemble the holy Angels, but the fallen ones. Can this resemblance flatter any man? a resemblance to the worst and most odious of all the creatures of God? Who would

not eagerly drop this wretched likeness, this tattered garb of guilt and shame, assume a resemblance to the glorious beings, whom we have been contemplating, and adorn himself with the unspotted, spiritual, and never-fading robe of humility and righteousness? The faith, repentance, and love, of the Gospel, are *the fine linen of the saints*, wrought, and made white, in the heavens; and with this *best robe*, in his father's house, every repenting and returning prodigal will be clothed.

3dly. *What a happy change would be accomplished in this world, if men would assume the spirit and conduct of Angels!*

Angels never indulge sloth, deceit, wrath, malice, envy, or impiety. Angels never cheat, corrupt, betray, nor oppress. Angels never profane the name of God, perjure themselves, ridicule sacred things, insult the Redeemer, resist the Holy Ghost, nor deny the being, the perfections, the word, or the government, of God. Angels never consume their time in idle amusements, or guilty pleasures; never slander each other, never quarrel; never make wars; and never desire, nor plunder each other's blessings. How miserable have men, by all this conduct, rendered this unhappy world! With what a prodigal hand do we waste the blessings, given to us by God; pervert our talents, and frustrate the end of our being. With what rapacity and violence do we plunder the blessings, and destroy the lives, of our fellow-creatures? In an existence, *naturally* accompanied by many evils, we are impatient to create and multiply sufferings; to lessen the good, which God has given; to shorten the period of life, already so little; and to surround it with miseries of our own creation. In this manner, and by ourselves, the evils which we suffer have been immensely multiplied; and the world, destined for our habitation, which, if we were pious, just, sincere, and kind, would be a comfortable residence, has been converted into a region of sorrow and mourning. Private dwellings, the proper mansions of peace and love, have been disturbed by domestic broils: the father contending against his son, and the son against his father; the mother with parental unkindness *provoking* her daughter to wrath, and the daughter, with filial impiety, revolting from her mother: Brethren have become strangers to each other; and for such a length of time, and with such violence of passion, that they have been *harder to be won than the bars of a castle.* Neighbourhoods have been distracted with divisions and contentions; and nations rent asunder by faction and discord. Empires have become fields of war and slaughter; and the earth has been changed into a vast receptacle of misery and ruin. All this wretchedness is the consequence of sin; its immediate product; its genuine offspring. Should we, then, drop this character; would not our consciences be more serene, our lives more pleasant, our families more harmonious, and the world more quiet and happy?

The mighty difference between Heaven and earth, angels and men, lies in holiness and sin. Angels are holy; we are sinful:

their residence is happy; ours in many respects wretched. This world was originally formed to be a delightful habitation; and at the close of the creation, was by God himself pronounced to be very good. Man was once immortal and happy; because he was just, kind, sincere, humble, and pious. What has the world, what has man, gained by the change? The afflicting answer may be summed up in a word. God made the earth a beautiful image of Heaven; Man, by his apostacy, has changed it into no obscure resemblance of Hell. God made man *a little lower than the Angels, and crowned him with glory and honour: Man, being in honour, abode not, but became like the beasts which perish.*

SERMON XIX.

CREATION.—ANGELS.

COLOSSIANS i. 16.—*For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be Thrones, or Dominions, or Principalities, or Powers: all things were created by him and for him.*

IN the preceding discourse, I began a consideration of *the nature and circumstances of Angels.* After examining these things generally, as imported by the several names, given to these illustrious beings in the Scriptures, I proposed to mention whatever was necessary to my design under the following heads:

I. *Their rank or Station;*

II. *Their Attributes;* and

III. *Their Employments.*

The two first of these subjects I then considered at some length. Under the second head I observed that they are possessed,

1st. *Of Wonderful Power;*

2dly. *Of Wonderful Activity;*

3dly. *Of Immortal Youth;*

4thly. *Of the noblest Intellectual faculties, and of Knowledge, superior to that of any other created beings;* and

5thly. *Of consummate Holiness.*

I shall now proceed to a further consideration of this branch of the general subject; and observe,

6thly. *That Angels are possessed of distinguished Loveliness of Character.*

In the view of passion, and taste, beings are lovely, when possessed of external beauty of form, and gracefulness of deportment. A complexion finely coloured and blended, a figure finely fashioned, features happily turned and adjusted, and a demeanour elegantly exhibited, are to our fancy, and our passions, so engaging and lovely, as not unfrequently to engross the affections of the mind. Yet even *we* are sensible that these are very imperfect objects of our attachment. Accordingly, we speak of them in customary language, as things of mere fancy; unsolid; unenduring; of little value; and, therefore, incapable of claiming, or receiving, the sincere approbation of the judgment, the full testimony of unbiassed Reason, on account of any inherent, or essential excellence.

But there are objects of a nobler kind, claiming, in a far higher degree, both our affections and our esteem. All the diversities of virtue, or holiness, are in their nature pre-eminently lovely. Virtue is the beauty of the mind; and as superior to that of the form, as the soul is superior to the tenement, in which it dwells. On this

delightful object, the understanding, in spite of every human prejudice, fixes its eye with unqualified approbation; and the heart, if not wholly destitute of candour, with sincere delight. Virtue is the beauty of the heavenly world; and, while it engrosses the attachment, and the homage, of Angels themselves, is regarded with entire complacency by its divine Author.

In exact accordance with the supreme value of this inestimable object, mankind customarily speak of it under its various names, as more excellent, more noble, more solid, more desirable, and as demanding, in a higher degree than any other attribute, the regard and complacency of every Intelligent being. In this manner we show, that, partial as we are, we still prefer worth to external beauty and grace.

There is, then, even in *our* view, a higher and nobler loveliness, than that which engages our fancy, or our taste; a foundation in the nature of things for more rational, more pure, and more enduring attachment. In what does this loveliness consist? In something, plainly, which is not found in external form, complexion, or gracefulness; something, which belongs to mind, and not to person. It does not consist in *intelligence*. Men of the greatest understanding, and information, are often odious, injurious, and deformed with all the turpitude, ever found in the human character. The fallen angels, also, are unquestionably possessed of intelligence, in degrees far superior to our comprehension; and are, notwithstanding, the most hateful of all beings.

In the *disposition*, then, the only remaining characteristical faculty of the mind, must its amiableness reside. But the disposition is lovely, either as it is sinful, or virtuous; either as it hates, or loves, God, and other Intelligent beings. To determine in which of these cases the mind is lovely, demands not even a question.

In virtue, then, according to the decision of mankind, sinful as they are, is found the true loveliness of Intelligent beings; that which unbiassed Reason approves; which is always excellent; which is uniformly the object of delight; which will never change; and which will never cease to be desired.

Of this loveliness, Angels are above all created beings supremely possessed. Angels are sincere, gentle, meek, kind, compassionate, and perfectly conformed to that great moral principle, communicated in the *words of the Lord Jesus, which he said, It is more blessed to give, than to receive.* This sublime excellence, incomparably *more precious than gold which perisheth*, has in them been, from the beginning, debased with no alloy, tarnished with no spot, impaired by no length of years, and changed by no weakness or imperfection. Free from every defect, and every mixture, it has varied with length of years merely towards higher and higher perfection, and shone, not only with undiminished, but with increased beauty and lustre. There is no good, which it is proper for Angels to do, which they are not habitually prepared to do. There is no

kindness, capable of being suitably exercised by them, which they do not in fact exercise. The more their faculties are enlarged; the more their knowledge is increased; the more their means of usefulness are multiplied; the more exalted is their excellence, the more disinterested and noble their disposition, the more intense their benevolence, and the more lovely and beautiful their character. The good, which they have already done, has only prepared them to do more and greater good; and the disposition, with which it was done, has only become stronger by every preceding exertion.

Let me pause, here, with a momentary digression; and persuade you to call to mind how delightful an intimate connexion must be with even a single rational being, who always spoke that which was true, and always did that which was just and kind; in whom confidence could be reposed without a fear, and from whom every kind office might be expected, without even a suspicion of disappointment. If the friendship of one such being would be a rich possession; how inestimable must be the privilege of living for ever in a world of such friends!

7thly. *Angels are invested with high personal Dignity and Glory.*

Dignity originally denoted the same with worth; but is now generally used to signify *that kind of worth, which is elevated and great;* which inspires reverence and admiration; rather than that, which is more gentle and familiar; as well as the manifestations of it in the conduct, and the honours, with which it is considered as suitably rewarded. *The spirit and character, formed by the magnanimous and sublimer virtues*, are here intended by *personal dignity; and all the honour, with which God has invested this character in angels*, is intended by *personal glory*. In these respects, Angels are totally distinguished from all other created beings.

This truth cannot but be evident from the account, already summarily given, of the attributes, both natural and moral, of these exalted Intelligences. Their minds, it has been shown, were originally formed with vast capacities, and with an unmingled and intense love of truth. Truth is an account of the character and works of God; subjects elevated above all height, and extended above all limits; possessed of inherent grandeur and sublimity literally infinite; fitted to awaken in every mind, formed with an understanding to perceive, and a taste to relish them, great ideas, and exalted conceptions; and calculated to inspire habits of thinking and feeling, of the most dignified nature. To these subjects, Angels have already devoted themselves, throughout a vast period of time, with supreme intenseness and fervour. Their views have been all formed without error, decay, or weariness; and their relish for the objects of their knowledge has only been strengthened by indulgence. Of course, their progress in understanding has been rapid, and their attainments have been very great. Of course, also, their minds have been continually expanded, and ennobled, by all the

conceptions, which they have entertained concerning these wonderful subjects.

In the mean time, the conscious exercise of such vast power and activity, and the possession of ever-vigorous, ever-blooming youth, destined to survive, and triumph, over time and labour, must carry with them a sense of personal importance, which, tempered and refined by perfect humility, cannot but be elevated in a manner to which there is no parallel. To this character, their stations, their residence, and their employments, all powerfully contribute. Highly favoured, exalted, and happy, in these great particulars, Angels have the nearest access to their Creator, for understanding the mysteries, and contemplating the greatness, of his dispensations, and for learning from them his infinitely majestic and glorious character. Heaven is the centre, and the seat, of all that is great and wonderful, all that is refined and exquisite, all that is splendid and glorious. To Angels, these magnificent things are habitually familiar; and by them their taste is formed, and their character established. Their exertions, also, are of a kind wonderfully sublime. The being, who can bind the four winds of Heaven, imprison the prince of the power of the air, or wing his flight in a moment to a distant world, possesses an inherent importance, to which our imaginations cannot extend; a sublimity of character, elevated beyond the utmost stretch of human sight.

Exactly accordant with these views of the subject are the splendour and majesty of appearance, frequently assumed by Angels in their visits to this lower world. I shall not detail the facts, of which this splendour has been composed; nor repeat the unrivalled descriptions of it, given to us in the Word of God. It will be sufficient for my present purpose to observe, that in their presence mankind have trembled, shrunk, and fallen; and, scarcely able to survive their impressions, have felt themeselves to be nothing, and less than nothing.

How abashed, how amazed, how dumb, should we be in the presence of *Gabriel*, known by us to be an inhabitant of the heavenly world; to *stand in the presence of God;* to be exalted above all human weakness, error, and sin; and to be wise, and great, and good, in the sight of God himself! How great must he seem to us; how dignified; how glorious! How little, on the contrary, should we appear to him; how unworthy! Would not our pride wither in a moment, and our vanity flee away? Should we not, like *Peter*, and his companions, in the presence of *Moses* and *Elias*, be instantly lost and bewildered; and utter, if we spoke at all, that which we did not understand?

Of all these attributes, it is to be remembered further, that they are *eternal*. Angels live for ever; and are hence termed, by way of distinction, *Living Ones*, or *Living Creatures*. With their being, their excellencies are all co-extended; and are in the same manner immortal. Nor are they merely immortal; but are perpetu-

ally improving. Every day, they study, and understand, more and more, the wonders of creation and Providence, and the character of their great Author. With their knowledge, their love to God is continually enlarged, and enraptured; their benevolence to their fellow-creatures, their amiable conduct, their sweetness, loveliness, and dignity of character, are all enhanced and refined. Great, wise, noble, and excellent, at first, they have regularly advanced in this divine progress of improvement to the present time.

How excellent did *Paul* become in the short period of his life, which elapsed after his conversion! How much more excellent and glorious have angels become; who, never stained with sin, weakened by prejudice, nor wearied by labour, have, with enlarged understanding, intense love of truth, and unmingled holiness of disposition, regularly and rapidly advanced in the attainment of all that is great and good through a period of six thousand years! How superlatively and universally excellent will they then become hereafter! To what a height of glory will they rise in the exercise of these faculties, in the pursuit of these objects, and in the indulgence of this disposition, throughout endless ages!

III. *Angels hold the first Employments, and Offices, in the Universe.*

In every government there must be, of course, public offices. These offices must also increase in number and importance, as the government becomes more extensive. In a *town*, they will naturally be few; in a *province*, more numerous; and in a *kingdom*, far more numerous still. In such an empire as *Rome* or *China*, a vast multitude of concerns continually exist; all of which must be the immediate business of persons, devoted to them only. Were this world under a single administration of government, the public offices would become numerous, important, and dignified, proportionally to the number, greatness, and complication, of its mighty interests. The kingdom of God, if I mistake not, is plainly exhibited both in his Word and Works, as a kingdom of means. Under his universal government, secondary causes, and subordinate agents, are employed with a real instrumentality, and efficacy, in accomplishing his pleasure. In such an empire, the concerns are necessarily immense, both in their number and their importance. Of these, some, however, are greater, and others less: while all are, in their respective places, proper and useful. These concerns, according to this scheme, are, to an extent undefinable, committed to such of his Intelligent creatures, as he has formed to conduct them under his own superintendency: and the offices, which they of course sustain, must, to our view, be, in a vast multitude of instances, invested with a greatness, dignity, and importance, incomprehensible.

The Intelligent beings, to whom the greatest and noblest of these concerns are entrusted, and by whom the most illustrious of all these offices are sustained, are undoubtedly the Angels of God.

Whatever demands the employment of created power, activity, knowledge, and virtue, of high distinction; whatever is in an eminent degree complicated, vast, or sublime; can with propriety be committed only to beings, eminently invested with these illustrious attributes. In the amazing extent of creation, in the eternal progress of providence, fields, sufficiently ample, are furnished for the employment of immense numbers of these glorious beings in business of high import, and inestimable dignity. To this scheme of things, accord, not only their attributes, but their numbers; as they are exhibited in the Scriptures: for we are there told, that *thousand thousands minister unto God, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him.*

That Angels are actually thus employed, can scarcely be doubted by any man, who remembers the illustrious attributes, of which they are possessed; and who believes, that these attributes were not given in vain. Should he, however, doubt, he may be furnished with proofs from the Scriptures, which cannot rationally be questioned.

1st. *Their Names clearly indicate their high employments.*

They are styled *Angels;* that is, the immediate messengers of God. They are styled *Thrones, Dominions, Authorities, Principalities or Governments, and Powers;* to denote, that they sit upon thrones, exercise dominion, hold authority, preside in government, and are invested with the power, necessary for these great purposes.

They are called *chief Princes;* to indicate, that they are the first order of rulers in the Universe, under him, *who has prepared his throne in the heavens, and whose kingdom ruleth over all.* They are called *Sons of God;* to teach us, that they are beings nearly related to God in character, favour, place, and authority. They are called *Morning Stars,* to teach us the splendour and glory, with which they outshine all other Intelligent creatures. They are named *Cherubim, and Seraphim;* to inform us, that they are beings, furnished with superior knowledge to discern, and with superior holiness to pursue, whatever is good and right, honourable to the Creator, and useful to his creatures.

All these names are descriptive either of the nature and attributes of these exalted beings, or of the stations and employments, for which, by this nature, they are qualified.

2dly. *The Scriptures, in many instances, exhibit them as thus employed.*

(1st.) *Angels are in the Scriptures declared to be extensively engaged in the immediate business of glorifying God and celebrating his praise.*

At the Creation, *the Morning Stars,* in the dawn of their being, surrounded their Maker during the progress of that great work; and, when it was finished, in the celebration of that peculiarly divine Sabbath, observed, consecrated, and blessed, by God him-

self, as an infinitely solemn and authoritative example to mankind. *sang together, and shouted for joy.*

When the Lord Jesus Christ descended on Mount *Sinai*, to publish, amid *thunders and lightnings, and a flame of devouring fire*, his most holy law, to the children of men, *the chariots of God, even thousands of Angels*,* attended him at this awful solemnity, and glorified him by their ministry in this sublime dispensation.

When the same divine Person became incarnate, *Gabriel* announced his birth to *Zachariah* and to *Mary*. An Angel, also, proclaimed these *glad tidings of great joy* to the shepherds of *Bethlehem:* and *a multitude of the heavenly host praised God* on the same occasion, in the noblest hymn ever heard in this lower world; and sang, *Glory to God in the highest! and on earth, peace: good will towards men!*

When he ascended on high, and led captivity captive, having finished the work of Redemption, and triumphed over all his enemies; the same exalted beings, with renewed transport and adoration, surrounded him with the same magnificent attendance as at *Sinai*, singing, as he approached the heaven of heavens, *Lift up your heads, O ye gates! and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors! and the King of Glory shall come in.*†

At the end of this earthly system, when *he shall come to judge the quick and the dead*, and blot out from under heaven this world of iniquity and rebellion; an Archangel, preceding him, will call the dead out of their graves: while the multitude of the heavenly host will shout to the Universe the awful wonders of the final day, and subjoin, to all its amazing transactions, their solemn Amen.

In the Heaven of Heavens, the four Living Ones *rest not, day and night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty! who was, and who is, and who is to come.*

And I beheld, says *St. John, and I heard the voice of many Angels round about the throne, and the Living Ones, and the Elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and wisdom, and riches, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.*

(2dly.) *Angels are employed in studying the works of God, and in learning from them his perfections.*

Who created all things, says *St. Paul, by Jesus Christ; to the intent, that now unto the Principalities, and Powers, in heavenly places, might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God.*

Which things, says *St. Peter, the Angels desire to look into;* or more literally, *Into which things, Angels earnestly desire to look with the deepest attention.* The original word, παρακυψαι, denotes *the action of stooping down to inspect minutely, and pry critically into, an object of investigation.*

* Psalm lxviii. 17, 18.

† Psalm lxviii. 17, 18, compared with Ephes. iv. 8, See also Psalm xxiv.

In the former of these passages, we are presented with one great end of the Creation of all things; viz. the disclosure of *the manifold wisdom of God*, in his dispensations to his *Church, unto Principalities and Powers in heavenly places*. As this disclosure was one great end of the Creation of all things; so it is evident, that Angels were created with the especial design, that they should attain the knowledge, which it conveys. In the second of these passages, we are taught, that the disposition of Angels is perfectly accordant with this design; and that *they earnestly desire* to investigate, and are, therefore, unceasingly employed in investigating, those things, for the knowledge of which they were especially created.

For this great purpose, these glorious beings are in the most eminent manner fitted by all their other employments, their wonderful attributes, and their exalted station. Particularly, in their employment as Messengers of God, in which they visit, not only this world, but the Ουρανια of the Scriptures; *the innumerable regions of the Heavens;* they are furnished with the most ample and perfect opportunities of understanding the endless multitude, and the astonishing nature, of the works of Creation and Providence. Throughout these incomprehensible tracts, there is every reason to believe, that the same unceasing diversity is continually pursued in all the divine works, which prevail so perfectly in this world. The nature, attributes, and real importance, of all things, are learned, not by inspection only, but also, in an extensive degree, by comparison. The relations, which they bear to each other, can be known in no other manner: and the knowledge of these is a most extensive and important part of all that is known. From the advantage, furnished him, of beholding many objects, and making numerous and accurate comparisons between them, a rational traveller, who has visited many countries, is universally acknowledged, not only to possess a more enlarged knowledge of the world than other men, but also to be a more sound and thorough judge of the things, with which he is acquainted. Angels visit distant worlds, probably with more ease and expedition than men, the towns in their neighbourhood; and compare systems with more perfect comprehension and accuracy, than we, states and kingdoms. At the same time, their strong and unmingled relish for all the objects of their contemplation, the unwearied and undiminished vigour of their minds, and the length of years, through which they have been employed in this illustrious pursuit, have, on the one hand, given it the peculiar power of habit; and, on the other, increase, beyond calculation, the pleasure which it originally and naturally yields. Man, by the limited nature of his powers, is almost of course obliged, whenever he studies, to confine himself to study; and, whenever he acts, to action. Angels, by their superior energy, seem fitted to pursue both courses at once; and to be able to study, and act, without hindrance, confusion, or any other disadvantage.

(3dly.) *Angels are employed in executing the judgments of God upon this world.*

The first judgment upon Man, which was excluding him from Paradise, appears to have been committed to the execution of these ministering spirits. In the same manner, they were the immediate instruments of inflicting the vengeance of God on the *Israelites;* on the army of *Sennacherib;* on *Nebuchadnezzar;* and on *Herod.* In the same manner also, they are exhibited in the Revelation of *St. John*, as pouring out the vials of divine wrath upon the nations of this guilty world, and especially upon the Antichristian Hierarchy, as the peculiar ministers of the justice of God. To us, with our limited views, and strong partialities, this office may seem undesirable, and a diminution of that perfect felicity, which I have attributed to this distinguished order of beings. The decision, however, will easily appear to be unfounded, if we remember, that they possess an entire and unchangeable confidence in God, and in the perfect rectitude of all his dispensations; and, in innumerable instances, a clear comprehension of the nature, and import, of the dispensations themselves; the wisdom and goodness, with which they are brought to pass; and the valuable and glorious ends, which they are intended to accomplish. In exact accordance with this view of the subject, is sung in heaven *the song of Moses and the Lamb. Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints! Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.*

(4thly.) *Angels are also employed in ministering Blessings to the children of God in this world.*

Are they not all ministering spirits, says *St. Paul, sent forth to minister for them, who shall be heirs of salvation?* In this passage, we are plainly taught, that ministering to the saints, is a standing employment of Angels, throughout the ages of Time. Accordingly, they are exhibited in *Jacob's* vision of the ladder, as *ascending, and descending*, from Heaven to earth, and from earth to Heaven, continually, in the discharge of this great duty. According to this declaration, also, we are furnished by the Scriptures with numerous examples of their actual ministry to the children of God. Thus Angels delivered *Lot* from *Sodom; Jacob* from *Esau; Daniel* from the lions; his *three companions* from the fiery furnace; *Peter* from *Herod*, and the *Jewish Sanhedrim;* and the nation of the *Israelites*, successively, from the *Egyptians*, *Canaanites*, and *Assyrians*. Thus they conducted *Lot*, *Abraham*, and the *Israelites*, in seasons of great difficulty and danger, to places, and circumstances, of safety and peace. Thus they conducted *Gideon* to the destruction of the *Midianites*, *Joseph and Mary* to *Egypt*, *Philip* to the *Eunuch*, and *Cornelius* to *Peter*, to the knowledge of the Gospel through him, and to the salvation of himself, his family, and his friends. Thus

Angels instructed *Abraham*, *Joshua*, *Gideon*, *David*, *Elijah*, *Daniel*, *Zechariah* the prophet, *Zachariah* the father of *John* the *Baptist*, the Virgin *Mary*, the Apostles, and their fellow-disciples. Thus they comforted *Jacob* at the approach of *Esau*; *Daniel* in his peculiar sorrows and dangers; *Zachariah* in the sufferings of his nation; *Joseph and Mary* in their perplexities; CHRIST in his agony; the Apostles and their companions after his resurrection; *Paul* immediately before his shipwreck; and the Church, universally, by the testimony and instruction, given in the Revelation of *St. John*.

Generally, the Scriptures inform us, especially in the visions of Ezekiel, Daniel, and John, that they are employed in executing various, great, and wonderful purposes of divine Providence. Here we behold them controlling evil spirits; wielding the elements of this world; producing, directing, and terminating, the great convulsions of time; conveying the souls of the just to the Paradise of God; *serving the wicked from the good* at the day of Judgment; and performing the duties of other dignified and glorious missions. All these are instances, either of wonderful power and skill, or of singular benevolence and excellency of character; both eminently honourable to them, and eminently important to the Universe. By these facts, we cannot fail to be convinced, that their employments are wholly noble and magnificent, and wholly suited to their dignified stations and exalted titles; as well as to the attributes of power, knowledge, and goodness, of which they are so transcendently possessed. Nor can we rationally doubt, that they visit every other habitable world, with messages and designs of the same sublime import; execute the great purposes of God in all the parts of his vast kingdom; and thus become, in an extensive sense, illustrious benefactors of the Intelligent Creation.

REMARKS.

1st. *These considerations furnish us with a strong presumptive argument, that the Scriptures are a divine Revelation.*

In the Scriptures we find an Order, or rather a Kind, of beings described, which were never known, nor imagined, by any person, who did not derive his acquaintance with them from that book. They are beings, who have a character, as appropriate as that of man, and differing from that of man as far, as finite Intelligences can be supposed to differ from each other. Yet the character is complete, entire, and of a piece with itself. Every attribute is suited to every other: all are angelic: all are heavenly. A station is also assigned to them, of dignity and importance perfectly fitted to their character, and worthy of being filled by such beings. Employments are also marked out for them, altogether becoming both the station and the character; angelic employments; suited to the Sons of God, the Morning Stars of Heaven. Can it be reasonably supposed, that these things were devised by human ima-

gination? Have similar things been ever thus devised? The fancy of man has, in all nations and ages, delighted itself with the employment of fashioning imaginary beings, of a nature superior to ours. What have been its productions? The Gods, demons, and Genii, of ancient; and the elves, sylphs, and fairies, of more modern, times. But how do all these shrink from a comparison with Angels? They are little, base, trifling, sordid, and sinful, enough to have been copied, with a few easy additions, from the depraved characteristics of men. But where does this world furnish materials for the composition of an angelic character? What originals has it presented, from which the portrait could be drawn?

A multitude of writers in the Scriptures, *fifteen at least*, have described these glorious beings with the most perfect harmony, and without a single discordant idea. In the mean time, their descriptions are extensively various, comprising many particulars, and wholly independent of each other. All the writers are in this respect, as well as others, originals. Not one is a copier; not one a plagiary: yet their representations are universally noble, sublime, dignified, beautiful, and lovely, beyond any thing, found in the most perfect writings of uninspired men.

How came these things to pass? Whence did these writers, in so distant ages, and differing so widely in education, genius, characters, interests, and views, unite with such perfect harmony in so difficult an object of conception; while writing for so diverse purposes, and on so diverse occasions? Whence is it, that not an individual of them has made a single slip; that not a thought is uttered, not a fact asserted, nor a doctrine declared, but such as is perfectly free from fault, impurity, littleness, and defect; such as is entirely noble, refined, and becoming so exalted and spotless a character? All heathen writers have stained even their Gods with great defects, and deformed them with gross crimes; and, wherever they have exhibited their Gods as acting, have filled up their history with weakness and depravity. The Angels of the Scriptures, on the contrary, are every where, by every writer, and and in every attribute and act alike, pure and perfect. The only answer, which can be given, is, God directed the one class of writers, and human reason and imagination the other.

2dly. *How wonderful, and how amiable, do these considerations exhibit the humility of angels!*

In the observations, which have been made, we have seen their character to be great and glorious without a parallel; their station exalted above that of all other created beings; and their employments the first in the kingdom of God. Yet they do not disdain, nor grudge, to minister to the wants and relief, to the instruction and the comfort, of men; who, compared with them, are only worms of the dust.

A single fact will set this subject in a stronger light, than any train of general observations. Call up to your view, then, a choir

of these illustrious beings, cheerfully leaving the glory of Heaven, and directing their flight to this forlorn and sinful earth, to accompany the departing spirit of poor, despised, forgotten *Lazarus*, to the world of happiness; to point the way to that distant and delightful region; and to aid his trembling wing to the house and presence of his Father and his God. What monarch, what noble, what gentleman, what plain man, would, willingly, have even attended his funeral? Who would have received him, when alive, into his house; powerfully as his sufferings pleaded for charitable relief? Who, much more, would have consented to become his companion? Who, still more, would have acknowledged himself his friend? Yet all this, Angels did not disdain.

Let us take to ourselves shame and confusion of face, at the remembrance of our pride and haughtiness of heart. How often do we despise, neglect, insult and trample under foot, those who, in the sight of God, are far better than ourselves! For what do we despise them? Because, perhaps, their houses, their persons, their dress, their wealth, or their talents, are inferior to our own. We might, indeed, sometimes pity them for these reasons, and be justified. But where shall we find an excuse for despising them?

Nor is the *meekness* of Angels less contrasted to our wrath and revenge. They do not even *bring railing accusations*. Much less do they, like ourselves, indulge furious resentment, and seek insatiable revenge. There is not a single reason to believe, that they ever exercised, even in one instance, personal resentment against the basest and most guilty child of *Adam;* or a revengeful thought against the most depraved inhabitant of hell. No provocation is able to disturb the serenity of their minds. No cloud ever overcasts their smiles, or intercepts the clear sunshine of their benevolence.

3dly. *How are the meek and humble virtues dignified by his great example!*

These virtues are the constant character, the essential attributes, the peculiar glory, of *Thrones*, *Dominions*, *Principalities*, and *Powers*. But these virtues, and those in whom they are found on earth, *man, who is a worm, and the son of man, who is but a worm*, regards with contempt. Men glory in being proud, in being wrathful, in being revengeful; in being tyrants and oppressors, in being heroes and butchers. To men of these characters, statues are erected; nay, temples have been built, and altars smoked with victims. To them, the page of the historian and the harp of the poet are consecrated. To their praise, the sculptor bids the marble breathe, and the painter teaches his canvass to glow. They live in palaces, and are entombed in mausoleums. Shouts and hosannas follow them through life; and, at their death, nations re-echo the cries of lamentation, and kingdoms are covered with sackcloth and ashes. How strange is all this to the eye of Reason! *Dives arrayed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously*

every day: while *Lazarus* lies *at his gate*, under the naked heavens, coveting *only to be fed with the crumbs, which fall from his table!* Nay, *Pilate and Herod* on the seat of judgment, and *Christ* on the cross!

In the invisible world, these things are wonderfully inverted. *Dives* expires; but no *Angels* convey *him to Abraham's bosom.* There the meek and lowly virtues claim the esteem and love, and engross the kind offices, of beings, possessed of the highest wisdom and excellence; and obtain the everlasting favour of the infinite God. On these virtues, Angels smile with complacency; while fools and sinners regard them with hatred and scorn. But, if *we* would be like Angels; if we would secure their good-will; if we would be admitted to their glorious company; if we would share in their immortal blessings; if we would dwell in the house of their Father and our Father, of their God and our God; we must esteem the things which they esteem; love the things which they love; and do the things which they do. We must renounce the haughty, angry, revengeful character, which we are so pleased to assume; become *meek and lowly of heart*, like the divine Redeemer; and in the midst of provocations, however great, must be ready cheerfully to say, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!*

4thly. *What exalted views does this subject present to us of the future state of the Righteous!*

In the Resurrection, says our SAVIOUR to the *Sadducees, the children of God shall be* ισαγγελοι, *equal to the Angels;* or, perhaps more properly, *they shall be like the Angels* in attributes, station, and employments. Like the Angels, they will possess endless youth, activity, power, knowledge, and holiness; enjoy the same immortal happiness, dignity, and divine favour; be lovely, beautiful, and glorious, in the sight of God; and *shine forth as the Sun in the kingdom of their Father.* Like the Angels, *shall they be sons, and kings, and priests, to God; and live and reign, with him for ever and ever.*

What a change must this be from the present weakness and guilt of man; from sluggishness and ignorance, decay and death, sin and misery! What a wonderful display of the boundless compassion of God, to raise us from such a depth to such a height! Can we hesitate to exclaim, "This is *love passing all understanding?*" Who would not, for these divine blessings, renounce the pleasures of sin; and cheerfully bid adieu to all that avarice, ambition, and sensuality can boast? Who would not, with all the wise and good, cease at once from the sordid pursuits of sinners, and direct every view, desire, and effort, towards the state and character of Angels, and the attainment of the same residence, employments, happiness, and glory?

5thly. *What sublime views does this subject furnish us of the greatness of Christ!*

By him, says the text, were all these illustrious beings created,

together with all their attributes, importance, and dignity. The character of every workman is seen, of course, in the nature of the work, which he has made. If this be insignificant and worthless; it exhibits nothing but the insignificance and worthlessness of the maker. If curious and excellent, if sublime and wonderful, it unfolds strongly, and certainly, his greatness, wisdom, and glory. Of what faculties are Angels the subjects! Of what intelligence, purity, power, loveliness, and elevation of mind! What then must be the perfections of Him, who contrived and formed Angels; who with a word called them into being; who preserves, informs, directs, controls, and blesses them forever? Great and excellent as they are, they are exhibited as *unclean in his sight, and as charged with folly* before him. How amazing, then, must be the perfection of his character! how great; how wise; how good!

SERMON XX.

CREATION.—FALLEN ANGELS.

JUDE 6.—*And the Angels, who kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved, in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.*

IN this passage, we have a concise, but very interesting, account of certain Angels, who once dwelt in Heaven. Created, at first, with all the excellencies of the Angelic nature, placed in circumstances of the highest honour, and enjoying the greatest happiness, they are here represented as having lost their character, and forfeited their honour and happiness. *The nature and allotments* of these Angels furnish the subject, which next demands our attention in this System of discourses.

Before I enter on the consideration of this subject, it will be proper to take some notice of an opinion, which has, chiefly within the two past centuries, been adopted concerning it, and advanced with confidence by persons of various descriptions: an opinion, which, if true, would preclude the present discourse, as groundless and nugatory. It is this; *that there are no such beings as Fallen Angels.* Infidels have made the Scriptural account of these beings, a formal objection against the truth and credibility of the Scriptures. Not a small number of men, professing themselves to be Christians, have partly yielded to the objection, and partly considered the contrary doctrine as necessary to their particular systems of Theology. Thus, here, as in other cases, men apparently opposed to each other in the belief, and the denial, of the Scriptures, have yet united in overthrowing their authority, and unsettling their character as a revelation.

From the *manner*, in which the doctrine has been opposed, we should naturally argue unfavourably concerning the opposition. It has been most usually opposed, not with sober argument, but with ridicule and sneers. A cause, which needs this support, is bad of course; and is by its abettors seen to be bad: for no man of common sense, will ever resort to this feeble and ineffectual mode of attack, or defence, when the surer, more rational, and more efficacious, resort of sober argument, is in his power.

If the existence of fallen Angels is incredible; it must be so for one of the following reasons.

1st. *That it is not revealed sufficiently to command belief; and that, as we have no direct knowledge of invisible beings, aside from Revelation, so in this case, Revelation does not warrant us to admit their existence:* or,

2dly. *There is some evidence in the nature of things, which disproves their existence, or at least, renders it highly improbable.*

Concerning *the first of these Methods of opposing the existence of fallen Angels*, I observe, that it has been very little resorted to, by the opposers of this doctrine. Here, as in many other cases, Revelation has been tried before the tribunal of Philosophy. Men have supposed, that their *own judgment* was a more unerring standard of faith and truth, than *the Scriptures*. That Infidels should thus act, is certainly to be expected; for this opinion is the basis of their system. However irrational, therefore, and indefensible, their conduct may seem to us; we are certainly to feel no surprise, when they resort to it, or rely upon it, with confidence. But for this opinion, they could not retain their system for a moment.

But, that men, professing to believe in the Scriptures as a divine Revelation, should adopt this method of establishing, or refuting, their declarations, is, to say the least, wonderful. Still, it has in every age been more or less the conduct of persons, who have professed this belief. It began to exist in the time of the Apostles; and was boldly adopted in defiance of their authority and inspiration. The declaration of *St. Paul*, relative to this subject, are ample proofs of the fact. The two first chapters of the first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, are, in a great measure, employed on this subject. In them he informs us, that to the Philosophical *Greeks*, who arrogated to themselves the titles of Σοφοι and Φιλοσοφοι, *Wise Men and Philosophers*, the doctrine of *the cross was foolishness*. This, therefore, was then a general decision of Philosophy. Against the adoption of that Philosophy, and the imitation of the men who professed it, he strongly cautions the *Corinthian* Christians; who were in no small danger from its imposing and deceitful influence. At the same time, he informs them, that this *foolishness*, as they termed it, *of God, was wiser than Men;* that *God had not chosen* men of this character *to call them* to salvation, but men of an opposite character, who disclaimed the very *words*, as well as the spirit, of this Philosophy; men, who, although despised and accounted as nothing by these vain, arrogant Philosophers, and their followers, were yet beloved of God, and the instruments of *their* salvation. He farther informs them, that *the wisdom of this world, is foolishness with God;* and again declares, *that the Lord knoweth the reasonings of the wise, that they are vain.* To the *Colossians* he writes, *Beware lest any man spoil you through Philosophy and vain deceit;* that is, vain and deceitful Philosophy; which, he declares, accorded with *the traditions of men, and the rudiments of this world, but not with Christ.* Of course, it merited contempt, on the one hand, and was fraught with danger, on the other.

From the age of the Apostles to the present time, almost every existing heresy has been derived from this source. The Scriptures were found by many men, and men, too, who were often distinguished for their ingenuity, not to agree with their Philosophy; and

of course could not, in their opinion, be true, unless they could be bent to such an agreement. Those, therefore, who chose still to acknowledge the Revelation of the Scriptures, employed themselves in helping out their character, as a system of truth, and removing their supposed inconsistencies, by new constructions, allegorical explanations, and generally, by substituting *what they ought to mean* for *that, which, according to the natural and proper force of language, they must mean.* Those, on the contrary, who cared little about them, finding the doctrines, which they contain, to disagree with their own Philosophy, denied their authority at once. Men of this class were, in my view, more rational, more self-consistent, and less injurious to the character of the Scriptures, than those of the other. For nothing can be more irrational, inconsistent, or injurious to the Scriptures, than to profess to receive them as a divine Revelation, and at the same time to make human opinion the standard, by which their declarations are to be tried. This is no other, than to sit in judgment upon God himself, (who, in this case, is acknowledged to be the Author of the declarations) and to determine whether he has spoken truth or falsehood. Must not Angels wonder to see Men thus employed?

The truth is; the doctrine in question is so often, and so clearly, asserted in the Scriptures, that the denial of it cannot be founded on *them alone.* All men act in this case, as *Dr. Priestly* has acted in questioning the existence of the holy Angels. In pursuing the doctrines of his peculiar system, he was led *to doubt*, and ultimately *to deny, the immateriality of the human soul;* and roundly decided, that it was nothing but organized matter. Angels, he saw plainly, stood in the way of his arguments concerning this subject: for no mind possesses sufficient ingenuity to render it even remotely probable, that Angels are material. And, as the human soul may as easily be supposed to be immaterial, as an Angel can be, there was no resort left to Dr. Priestly, but to question the existence of Angels altogether. This, therefore, he chose to do, notwithstanding the numerous express declarations of God to the contrary; declarations as express as language will admit; rather than give up a doctrine, which he thought necessary to the support of his system. In this manner, the Scriptures may be made to declare any thing.

With respect *to the second of these reasons*, on which the existence of Fallen Angels is denied, viz. *that there is some evidence in the nature of things, which disproves the existence of such beings, or at least, renders it highly improbable;* I observe,

1st. *That the existence of Angels, generally considered, is originally less improbable than that of Men.*

To a rational being, unacquainted with the existence of either Angels or Men, pure spirits would seem more likely to be a part of the Creation of God, than spirits united to bodies; beings wholly rational, than beings partly rational and partly animal. God is a

pure spirit. It is not rationally supposed, that, in creating Intelligent beings, he would unite them to Matter, in such a manner as to form one being of both matter and mind; but it is rationally supposed, that, delighting as he does in his own manner of existence, he would create beings as much like himself, as might be. In creating men, a new difficulty concerning existence, a new mystery of Philosophy, is presented to our contemplation: viz. the union of soul and body, so accomplished, as to constitute one percipient being. Should it be here observed, that Philosophers, in denying the existence of Angels, whether virtuous or fallen, avoid this difficulty, by denying also the existence of an immaterial soul in Man; I acknowledge, that the objection is fairly alleged, as being founded in truth; but I beg leave to subjoin, that in this very manner, they introduce to us a new, more mysterious, and more perplexing doctrine; a doctrine so mysterious, as to be no other than a gross absurdity: viz. the doctrine *of cogitative, or thinking matter.* As I propose hereafter to discuss this subject at length; I shall dismiss it for the present without any further remarks.

2dly. *That Angels after their creation, fell, involves no more difficulty, than that which is involved in the fall of Man.*

All, that in the nature of the case, appears necessary to accomplish the fall of any finite being, is a sufficient temptation. Temptation, for aught that appears, may rise to any degree, beneath infinite; and there is no more reason to suppose, that the strength of an Angel, or his habits of virtue, are sufficient to resist all possible temptation, than to suppose, that the strength of a man is sufficient. I speak, here, of such a man as *Adam;* who antecedently to the first temptation, was absolutely free from sin. The same temptation, which would overcome the man, might not, and probably would not, overcome the Angel; but a temptation, sufficiently increased to bear an equal proportion to his disposition to resist, might overcome him; and undoubtedly would: nor is there any apparent proof, that God is any more obliged to secure an Angel from falling, than to secure a man.

3dly. *That fallen Angels, if permitted, should act in the affairs of mankind, is attended with no more improbability, than that virtuous Angels should thus act.*

Virtuous Angels are declared to be *all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation;* and are, throughout the Scriptures, exhibited as being really, continually, and extensively, concerned in the affairs of the present world. With the same clearness, are fallen Angels also declared to be thus employed.

Nor is there any *presumption* against this interference of either. *We*, it is true, could not know this fact, unless it were declared to us; or unless we were to become acquainted with it by experimental evidence. But, that the rational inhabitants of one world should be interested in the concerns of another, and, if allowed by God thus to act, interfere in them, in a manner suited to their re-

spective dispositions, is in a high degree probable. *We*, certainly, if we were able, and were permitted, to visit the planetary worlds, should take such a part in the important concerns of their inhabitants, as suited *our* dispositions. If we were governed by benevolent motives; we should save, or relieve, them, so far as was in our power, from dangers and sufferings; if by malevolent ones, we should promote their distress and ruin. We do in reality thus act in this world; not in our own affairs only, but in those of others; in the affairs of strangers, as well as of friends; and of those in distant nations and countries, as well as our own. But there is nothing more unnatural, or improbable, in our interference, if it were permitted, in the concerns of distant worlds, than in those of distant nations.

4thly. *There is no more difficulty in supposing, that the fallen Angels accomplish evil in the divine kingdom, than that fallen men do the same.*

It is, indeed, originally improbable, that either men or Angels should accomplish evil in the divine kingdom; or, universally, that evil should exist at all. But, since we know, that it does exist, there is no more perceivable difficulty in attributing it to one class of Intelligent creatures, than to another. Nor is there any explanation of the agency of *men* in producing evil, which may not be applied in a manner, equally satisfactory, to that of *Angels*.

5thly. *That Angels should communicate thoughts, either good or evil, to mankind, is originally no more improbable, than that we should communicate them to each other.* We do this, daily and hourly, in many ways, which are familiar to us by experience, but which were originally unimaginable by ourselves, and probably by any other finite beings. We show our thoughts to each other, by words, tones, gestures, silence, hieroglyphics, pictures, letters, and many other things. All these, antecedent to our experience of them, were hidden in absolute darkness, from our conception. If all mankind had been born dumb, no man would have entertained a single thought concerning the communication of ideas by *speech*. The conveyance of thought by *looks*, also, if never experienced by us, would have been necessarily deemed mysterious and impossible. Yet very many thoughts are thus conveyed by every person living; and with very great force; and frequently with entire precision. Nay, the countenance often discloses the whole character at once.

The Angels communicate their thoughts to each other, we know, because the Scriptures have declared the fact: that they may communicate them to *us*, we have no solid reason to doubt. Of the mode of communication, in either case, we know nothing; and are unable to conjecture any thing, but what is idle and useless. But, that they may convey thoughts into our minds, as well as understand those, which arise in them, contravenes no analogy, and no evidence.

Should it be said, that, *when we communicate thoughts to each other, we are conscious of the act, by which the thoughts are communicated to us, and of the presence, and agency, of the communicator; but that we are conscious, in no instance, of communication from Angels, and never perceive their presence, or agency:* whence *it is reasonably concluded, that Angels do not convey thoughts to our minds:* I admit the declaration as just; but deny the inference, derived from it by the objector. There is no proof from any thing, with which we are acquainted, that thoughts cannot be conveyed to us by a being, of whose presence, and agency, in conveying them, we are not conscious.

In the Scriptures we are informed abundantly, *that God, by his Holy Spirit, communicates thoughts to mankind.* But it is certain, that we have no consciousness of his presence, and agency, in communicating them. Of the thoughts themselves, we are indeed conscious; but not of the source, whence they are derived. The same doctrine, for ought that appears, is equally applicable to our reception of thoughts from Angels.

6thly. *If good Angels may with propriety be supposed to promote our obedience; evil Angels may with the same propriety be supposed to prompt us to disobedience.*

If the Agency of these two classes of beings should be exactly balanced; it is plain, that we could suffer no injury. There is no reason to conclude, however, that the influence of good Angels does not, upon the whole, overbalance that of evil ones. But all, that is necessary to vindicate God, in the case supposed, (if even this is necessary) is, that we be not, upon the whole, subjected by their joint agency to any disadvantage. That we are thus subjected, the Scriptures furnish us not a single reason to believe; nor can it be reasonably believed, unless, perhaps, where judicial blindness is inflicted as a punishment on an obstinate sinner. On the contrary, there is sufficient reason to conclude from the mercy of God, as unfolded in the Scriptures, that he always causes the Scale in this case to preponderate in our favour.

Thus have I considered all the material objections, which I think of, against the existence, and agency, of Angels, particularly evil ones, suggested by human Philosophy; and, if I mistake not, have proved them to be unfounded. I proceed, therefore, to a particular consideration of the doctrines, contained in the text.

In this passage of Scripture, we are informed,

I. *That after the Angels were created, a part of them kept not their first estate:*

II. *That they left their own habitation:*

III. *That they are confined in chains under darkness:* and,

IV. *That they are reserved in this state unto the judgment of the great day.*

These propositions I shall briefly examine in the order specified.

I. *After the Angels were created, a part of them kept not their first estate.*

The Angels, who fell, were, in their first estate, of the same rank and character, engaged in the same employments, and possessed of the same happiness, which were enjoyed by their virtuous companions. Accordingly, they are described by the same names in 1 Cor. xv. 24, and Ephes. vi. 10. This doctrine is also clearly indicated in the text: where, in the original, it is said, *that they kept not their principality;* instead of *their first estate;* as it is improperly rendered in our Bible. All these blessings, however, they lost by rebelling against God. Of this great and wonderful event; a revolt in the heavenly world, and among the highest order of created beings; we have no regular history in the Scriptures. Still, we are abundantly assured by them, that it actually took place. By various declarations, allusions, and hints, contained in them, we are taught that *Satan*, an Angel of pre-eminent distinction in heaven, rebelled, under the influence of pride and ambition, against his Maker. In this deplorable enterprize, we further learn, that multitudes of the heavenly host united with him; and with the same disposition, violated the law, and revolted from the government, of God. That pride and ambition were especially the sins, by which Satan and his companions fell, is, I think, sufficiently evident from 1 Tim. iii. 6: where *St. Paul*, speaking of a Bishop, says, *he must not be a novice*, νεοφυτον, *a new convert, lest, being puffed up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the Devil.* In this passage it is plainly asserted, that the Devil was condemned for his pride, and it is fairly presumable, that the same sin was the source of condemnation to his companions. The revolt appears to have been but one; to have existed at one time; and to have united those, who shared in it, in the same guilt, as well as in the same undertaking.

II. *They left their own habitation.*

By this phraseology, *heaven is perhaps intended;* or that happy world, in which all the angels were originally united together around the throne, and in the peculiar presence, of God. If this sense be admitted, as by most persons it probably will be; then it would seem, that they voluntarily deserted this happy place, and chose to withdraw themselves from its glorious blessings, rather than continue under the government, from which they were derived. If οικητήριον, the Greek word which is rendered *habitation*, denotes, as some divines have supposed, some other residence, or station, assigned them in some other world: then it would seem, that they left this residence, and the principality, or government, that is, the office, or station, which they held; refusing to perform the duty, assigned them by their Creator. In either case, they were shut out of Heaven; and, as *St. Peter* informs us, were cast out by a final banishment from God; and were never more permitted to return to their former habitation. They had despised, and disturbed, the happiness of heaven; and therefore were permitted to enjoy it no more. They were discontented with their blessings; therefore they were taken from them. They had revolted from their God; therefore he cast them off.

III. *They are confined in chains under darkness.*

Darkness is a state, obviously suitable for beings, to whom the light of heaven was unsatisfactory and odious; *and chains* are most proper for beings, whose proud and wanton wishes were discontented with *the glorious liberty of the sons of God.* Both, also, united, form a degradation, eminently fitted for beings, who, at the head of the created universe, were impatiently ambitious of a higher station. Both, at the same time, constitute a proper temporary punishment for beings, who rebelled against the government of God himself; who kindled discord, even in heaven; and to whom all their exalted blessings stood for nothing, while any higher and richer blessings remained.

IV. *They are reserved unto the judgment of the great day.*

The punishment and degradation of these evil beings, are not completed. They will hereafter be tried, and condemned, for all the evils, which they will have wrought, or attempted, during the continuance of this earthly system. These evils, however gratifying to them in the perpetration, will, after the judgment, return upon their own heads: and, instead of the triumph for which they hoped, and laboured, will cover them with eternal shame, and overwhelm them in endless ruin. The chains, which they now wear, are literally everlasting; and will confine them unto the judgment, so that they cannot escape; and will confine them for ever in the sufferance of that misery, to which they have destined themselves by a voluntary devotion.

Such, generally, is the Scriptural account of the character and allotments of evil Angels. It will be proper to add a few more particulars, derived from the same source. The Leader or Prince, of these evil beings, was the tempter of our first parents; the author of all the miseries, and an instrumental cause of all the sins, which have followed that dreadful event. The same disposition, which manifested itself in his rebellion in the heavenly world, was here directed in the same manner against the government of his Maker: a disposition compounded of malice, baseness, and treachery. Hence he is styled in the Scriptures, the *adversary; the calumniator; the father of lies; the destroyer; a murderer, and a liar, from the beginning.* All his followers sustain the same dreadful and detestable character. So far as has been in their power, they have deceived, betrayed, and destroyed the race of men; have been uniformly the enemies of God and mankind; have tempted them unceasingly to sin: and have especially persecuted and distressed the children of God. They powerfully excited the persecution, and crucifixion, of the Redeemer; and the sufferings of his Apostles and their followers. From that time to the present, they have unceasingly pursued the same malignant course; and will hereafter, so far as they are permitted, delude, distress, and destroy, unto the end of the world.

REMARKS.

I. *In this passage, we find a short, but affecting account of one of the most stupendous events, which have taken place in the Universe.*

A vast multitude of Intelligent beings, of the first order in the divine kingdom, excelling all other orders in knowledge, power, and splendour, and unrivalled in the favour of God, rose up in rebellion against their Creator, Benefactor, and Sovereign; lost their pristine honour and happiness, their primeval virtue and dignity; sunk down to the depths of sin, shame, and misery; and incurred the endless hatred and contempt of all good beings.

From this singular and amazing event, many interesting truths may be learned by us.

1st. *No created faculties, no finite holiness or happiness, furnish sufficient inducements to prevent creatures from apostacy.*

Angels fell. All others, therefore, may fall; and, if left to themselves, will fall. The true reason, why *the spirits of just men made perfect, and the innumerable company of holy Angels*, persevere in their obedience, is evidently, I think, not their own inherent perfection, but the promise of God and his almighty power, especially exerted to secure them from sin. Without this safeguard, they would, at least in my view, be utterly unsafe, and plainly exposed to destruction. We cannot but see, therefore, with what forcible propriety our Saviour has taught us *to pray after this manner. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil!* If Angels needed a continual exertion of divine power to preserve them from falling; how much more do we, frail and feeble as we are, prone by nature to sin, and easily overcome by temptation, need the same exertions for our daily and hourly safety! How constantly, and earnestly, ought we to offer up these petitions! How unceasingly ought we to beseech God to *keep our feet from falling, our eyes from tears, and our souls from death;* and to implore the influence of his Holy and Good Spirit to make *the meditations of our hearts, and the words of our mouths, acceptable in his sight.* He only can preserve *the bruised reed* from falling asunder, and *the dimly burning flax* from being extinguished in everlasting darkness.

2dly. *We are here taught, that pride could disturb the peace and happiness of heaven, and prove the cause of endless ruin to a multitude of inhabitants.*

How great an evil then, is pride! It overcast, in a moment, all the beautiful and eternal prospects; it eclipsed, in a moment, all *the splendour*, virtue, and dignity, of Angels. What a vast, what an immeasurable ruin did it here accomplish! What a change did it make in the Universe! What an amazing change did it produce in those, by whom it was exercised! How ought we, then, to tremble at the indulgence of pride; the sin, to which we are probably more prone than to any other! More, or less, it occupies every heart; manifests

itself in all the conduct of the children of men; and intrudes itself into their piety, their benevolence, their prayers, their songs, their alms, their humility, and their repentance. If Angels were so odious in the sight of God, on account of their pride; how odious must we be! If they were ruined by it for ever; what will become of us?

3dly. *We are further taught, that no creatures are so necessary or important, to God, as to be secure from his anger when they sin against him.*

Angels sinned, and were destroyed. Who, then, if found of the same character, will escape?

Men often satisfy themselves, that they are safe in the falsely intended reflection, *that God never made men to damn them.* I have used the words, which I have frequently heard used to express this miserable *refuge of lies.* It is undoubtedly true, in the strictest sense, that God never created either men, or any other beings, for this end; but it is equally true, that he has created men, and Angels also, who, after they were created, sinned; and who, for their sin, were condemned to final perdition. The phraseology, apparently true, is substantially false; and is used only for the purpose of deceiving ourselves and others. The Angels might certainly have used this language with more seeming force, and justice, than we can; but it could not save them, and, therefore, certainly cannot save us.

The *number of wicked men*, often relied on in no small degree as a foundation of hope and safety, is merely a foundation of sand. The number of the wicked Angels did not avail them at all. Every one of the rebels was destroyed as absolutely, as if no other had been concerned in the rebellion. *Their* number, also, was immensely great; and one of them was of more worth and importance, than many men united.

5thly. *The punishment of the evil Angels is not disciplinary.*

They have been already punished at least six thousand years; yet, instead of being reformed, they have grown worse continually; and will grow worse, not only till the day of judgement, but probably for ever. The Scriptures inform us, that the punishment of evil Angels is the same with that of evil men. The punishment of evil men, therefore, is not disciplinary, but punishment properly so called; punishment designed to reward the sins, not to amend the characters, of either Angels or men. Both are hopeless of amendment; yet both may be useful, although dreadful, examples to the rest of the universe. There is not a reason to believe, that sin was ever renounced, or a sinner reformed, except by the almighty power of the Spirit of Grace.

II. *We learn from these observations, that opposition to God, is supremely odious and deformed.*

This is the fundamental characteristic of Apostacy in both Angels and Men. Of this, the diabolical character is made up. How

odious and deformed is it most justly accounted! How false; how malicious; how cruel; how base; how detestable! Let it be remembered, that all opposition to God, is, in nature and substance, the same; and that it differs not in kind, but merely in degree.

III. *In how many respects do wicked men resemble wicked Angels!*

Like them, do wicked men exalt themselves against God, hate his government, oppose his designs, and revile his character; inflate themselves with pride; murmur at their own allotments; covet the enjoyments of others; corrupt their fellow-creatures; tempt them to iniquity; and defraud them of endless life. Like them, do they hate, envy, injure, calumniate, and destroy. How much of the history of this great world has resembled a history of fiends! How much of it has been a history of falsehood, fraud, treachery, pollution, slanders, contentions, murders, oppression, slaughter, irreligion, impiety, profaneness, and blasphemy! How readily have evil men, like evil angels, undertaken to rival God; and demanded the homage, worship, and obedience, due to him alone!

How laboriously do Infidel writers, even now, oppose their Maker, and their Redeemer; and strive to shut both their fellow-men and themselves out of heaven! Particularly, with what frequency, and constancy, do they repeat the very falsehood, which was first told to the parents of mankind: *Although ye disobey God, ye shall not surely die.* How continually do wicked men, by argument, ridicule, eloquence, and example, tempt each other to sin against God! How great a part of their life and labours do multitudes spend in this employment! Where can we find a moral distinction between this conduct, and that of fallen Angels?

IV. *The same punishment, which is reserved for evil Angels, is accordingly reserved for evil men.*

This punishment was *prepared*, at first, *for the Devil and his Angels.* But Christ, the final *Judge of the quick and the dead*, has informed us, that impenitent men shall, at the great day, stand with them on the left hand; be included in the same sentence; and depart to the same place of torment. Both will have been embarked in one cause; will have sustained one character; and will, therefore, share in one allotment of wo. Perhaps there is not a more affecting, more overwhelming consideration to a serious mind, than this: that evil men will hereafter be confined in the same habitation with these hateful beings; who are possessed of a disposition to do every thing, which is injurious to God, and their fellow-creatures, and to perpetrate all the crimes dictated by malice, cruelty, deceit and revenge. To be imprisoned in *this* world with a collection of abandoned villains; to be hated and despised, deceived and betrayed, oppressed and insulted, wounded to the soul with unceasing cruelty and treachery, and broken down by scorn and in-

solence, even for our present momentary life; would, I think, be a lot sufficiently dreadful to lacerate the soul with agony. What then must be the nature and misery of a confinement with these powerful, active, sagacious beings; whose minds are all malice, fraud, and cruelty; and whose endless being is only a succession of rage, revenge, and despair!

SERMON XXI.

CREATION.—THE EARTH.

GENESIS i. 1.—*In the beginning God created the Heaven and the earth.*

IN the four preceding sermons, I have briefly considered the several things, intended in the Jewish use of the word *Heaven;* and made some observations concerning *the character and circumstances of those beings, who either are, or have been, Inhabitants of the Supreme Heaven.* The next subject of examination in our progress, is *the World, which we inhabit.*

In the history, given by *Moses* of this great work, we are informed,

In the first place, *that, together with the rest of the material system, it was made of nothing;* or, in other words, *the materials were brought into existence, of which the world was afterwards composed.* That we might be at no loss concerning this truth, *Moses* has taught it distinctly in *Genesis* ii. 3; where he informs us, that *God rested from all his works, which he created, and made;* or, as in the original, *created, to make.* Of the energy, by which this mighty effort was accomplished, the Psalmist gives us a most sublime conception, when he says, concerning the Creator, that *He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.* These materials, after they were first brought into being, were, originally, a mere mass of confusion, in the language of the Divine Writer, *without form, and void;* and are styled, successively, *the earth, the waters,* and *the deep.*

Secondly. *The first element, separated from the Chaos, was light;* the most wonderful, and the most useful, of all material objects. At this time, it seems not to have been gathered into any common receptacle; as, according to the received philosophy, it is at the present time; but to have been diffused extensively through the universe. It is possible, that this may now be its real state; and that the sun, and stars, instead of being in themselves luminous, may merely possess the power of originating its motion, and direction. That period of darkness, which intervened between the creation of the Chaos, and the production of light; and that period of light, which preceded the next return of darkness, constituted the first day. In reference to this event, the *Israelites* were commanded to *celebrate their Sabbath from evening to evening:* this being the true course of a natural day.

Thirdly. *The next event in this great* work was the constitution of the Firmament, and a division of the chaotic mass into two great

parts, one beneath and one above the Firmament. This was the work of the second day.

Fourthly. *This was followed by the separation of the land from the waters;* the land being named *Earth;* and the great collections of water, *Seas.*

To this, immediately succeeded *the creation of grass and herbs, of shrubs and trees.* These were all formed with the power of reproduction, and of continuing their respective kinds in this manner to the end of the world. By a wonderful process of vegetation, they were enabled to yield, each its own proper seed: a minute particle, which being committed to the earth, a plant of the same nature and properties regularly springs up, and gradually advances to its perfection. Thus vegetables have existed in every age, of the same kinds, which were formed on the third day of the Creation; and have ever constituted much of the food of both men and animals, and not a little part of the pleasures, enjoyed by both. With the creation of these, terminated the third day.

Fifthly. *On the fourth day were created the lights of heaven, particularly the sun and moon.*

As I have heretofore considered these, in the discourse on the Heavens; it will be unnecessary to repeat here what I have so lately said. I shall, therefore, confine myself to a few additional observations.

These luminaries were set in the firmament of heaven, to divide the day from the night; and to be for signs and for seasons, for days and for years. Accordingly, they have been the great means of distributing time, from the beginning, into all its important divisions; enabling us to form the chronology of the world, to ascertain the order and connexion of all historical events, and to regulate, by correct dates, our various useful business.

The Sun, at the same time, is the great fountain of light to this world, and to all those, which are united in our system; and thus enables the inhabitants to pursue successfully their necessary employments. It is the Parent, also, of that universal vegetation, with which the earth is so beautifully adorned, and on which, we are so obviously dependent for the existence of health, comfort, and life. Not less absolutely, and still more immediately, is our life, together with our activity, dependent on the presence, warmth, and energy, of this fountain of light. In a word, whatever lives and moves, lives and moves by the influence of the sun; and without his presence, eternal night, and eternal winter, would reign with boundless desolation over this habitable globe.

The moon, also, is inestimably useful to mankind in the beautiful light which she gives by night, in the important changes, which she accomplishes in the ocean, and the atmosphere; and in becoming, in connexion with the other luminaries of heaven, the source of a great part of our skill in Navigation, and our knowledge of Geography, and Astronomy.

Sixthly. When the earth was thus prepared to be a habitation of living beings; God said, on the morning of the fifth day, *Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life; and fowl, that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.* Immediately the ocean, and the air, were filled with their respective inhabitants. The innumerable useful and delightful purposes, which they were destined to accomplish, and which accordingly they have accomplished to the present time, it will be unnecessary to particularize on the present occasion.

Seventhly. On the sixth, and last, day of the creation, *the Earth was replenished with the four-footed beasts, and creeping things, by which it has been ever since inhabited.* These, also, so useful to man, and so indispensable to his comfortable existence, are so well known, as not to demand any account of their nature or destination, from me.

Eighthly. *All these works of the Divine hand were severally pronounced by their great Author to be very good.* Such indeed was the original nature of them all. This world was formed to be a delightful residence. Its surface was beautiful; its soil fertile without decay; its seasons vernal; its atmosphere, waters, and productions, pregnant with life; and all its inhabitants, pacific, useful, and happy. In the country of *Eden, the Lord God planted also a garden,* to become the appropriate residence of the first man, and here *he made to grow every tree, that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food.* This Paradise, was the beautiful Metropolis of a beautiful world.

REMARKS.

From these observations, we learn,

1st. *How mighty and majestic a work was the creation of this world!*

The Earth is a vast and solid globe, composed of particles, so small as to be imperceptible to us, united by the energy which called them into being, and holden together by the same energy in a manner wholly incomprehensible. This globe is *hung upon nothing;* and moved through the fields of Ether with amazing velocity, and yet with infinite ease, by the hand of its Creator. Too great to be moved at all, perhaps, by all created Intelligences, it has yet for many thousand years been rolled on with perfect ease by Him, *who fainteth not, neither is weary.* It has also moved always in its own place, and in perfect harmony with other worlds. Its motion, at the same time, is so regular and undisturbed, as to be imperceptible to its inhabitants; and yet so rapid, as to outrun every human conception.

In a manner not less wonderful, it turns its face continually to the sun; and derives light, and warmth, and energy, for the comfort of its inhabitants, the production of its fruits, and the accomplishment of the business, allotted to the race of man.

How expressive of infinite Power, were the acts of calling it into being, uniting its parts, preserving its structure, moving it through the boundless void, and regulating with perfect harmony all its various affections!

How expressive of infinite Wisdom is the endless diversity of beings, which it contains; their structure, qualities, and uses; their relations, and dependences; their wants, and supplies; their endlessly various beauty, novelty, and grandeur!

Nor is infinite Goodness less wonderfully manifested by the bounty, every where displayed, in providing for the least as well as the greatest; in making the least, that it *might be provided for;* and in giving to each its own peculiar happiness. How evidently are all these things the work of a God!

2dly. *How wonderful is the Order of things, which was established at the Creation.*

This subject may be advantageously divided into two parts:

The order of things, which is permanent; and that, which is subject to perpetual revolutions.

Of the former class, are the stable position of the globe at given distances from the heavenly bodies; the position of its poles; its regular motions round its axis, and round the sun, by which the revolutions of the seasons, and the returns of day and night, are accomplished; the steady attractions of gravitation and cohesion, which produce the stability of the earth itself, and all its great affections. All these are indispensable to the existing state of the world and its inhabitants. The order of these things I call permanent, although subject to many changes, and in several instances a mere series of changes; because they are stable, regular, and unvarying in their nature.

The other and more mutable course of things respects the animal, vegetable, and mineral, kingdoms; the state of the atmosphere, the ocean, and the surface of the earth. These all are subjects of unceasing changes; and several of them of continual decay, and continual renovation. Plants and animals are formed to renew and perpetuate their kinds through an indefinite period; and, were the date of the earth to be sufficiently protracted, to continue them for ever. Nor are mineral substances, so far as they are liable to decay, unprovided with the means of re-production. Stones decay, and return to earth; and earth is petrified, or hardened into stone. Ores are supposed to be exhausted and renewed. Gems, and other beautiful substances, are multiplied; and worn out. Soils are furnished anew for the most luxuriant vegetation. The ocean is also, in a sense, emptied, and filled again. From that great storehouse of waters, vapour perpetually ascends, and is discharged on the earth, in rain, snow, and hail, in mists and dews: while the earth, through its various channels, returns again its tribute of waters to the ocean. Thus, in the language of the wisest of men;

> "Generation goeth, and generation cometh;
> But the earth doth ever abide.

The Sun also riseth, the Sun also setteth,
And hasteth to the place where it rose;
It passeth to the south: again it circleth to the north.
Round and round goeth the wind,
And ever repeateth its circuits.
All the rivers run down into the sea;
Yet the sea doth not overflow:
To the place, whence the rivers go forth,
To the same, to flow again, do they return.
All the things, thus at their task, no man can recount;
The eye would not be able to behold them,
Nor would the ear be competent to hear them."

3dly. *How wonderful are the Uses of the various things, which constitute this earthly system!*

How important to mankind is *the Mineral Kingdom!* How indispensable is the soil for vegetation; the stones and clay for building; the peat and coal for fuel; the metals for all the necessary and ornamental arts of life, and for the existence of almost every thing, which we name a convenience, or a comfort. Iron, alone, is indispensable to the employments, and even to the existence, of civilized life. Without it, Agriculture, Commerce, arts, and science, would dwindle speedily into nothing; and, but for its aid, would never have been.

To minerals, also, we are indebted for medicines, of the most valuable nature; indispensable to the restoration of health, and the continuance of life.

What, then, shall be said of *the Vegetable Kingdom;* of grass, as food for cattle; and herbs, and grains, as the food of men; of the flax, cotton, and hemp, with which we are clothed; of trees, as the materials of fuel, building, and fencing; and as the means of accomplishing a multitude of other purposes, equally demanded by necessity and comfort?

Finally, What shall be said of the *Animal Kingdom?* of the horse, the ox, the cow, the camel, and the sheep, of the furry tribes, and the silk-worm; all of which so largely contribute either to the husbandry of man, his food, his clothing, or his pleasure?

Nor ought we, in considering the nature of earthly things, to forget them, as the delightful means of *Beauty and Grandeur.*

Were all the interesting diversities of colour, and form, to disappear; how unsightly, dull, and wearisome, would be the aspect of the world! The pleasures, conveyed to us by the endless varieties, with which these sources of beauty are presented to the eye, are so much things of course, and exist so much without intermission, that we scarcely think either of their nature, their number, or the great proportion, which they constitute in the whole mass of our enjoyment. But were an inhabitant of this country removed from its delightful scenery to the midst of an *Arabian* desert; a boundless expanse of sand; a waste, spread with uniform desolation, enlivened by the murmur of no stream, and cheered by the beauty of no verdure; although he might live in a palace, and riot in splen-

dour and luxury, he would, I think, find life a dull, wearisome, melancholy round of existence; and amid all his gratifications, would sigh for the hills and valleys of his native land, the brooks, and rivers, the living lustre of the Spring, and the rich glories of the Autumn. The ever-varying brilliancy and grandeur of the landscape, and the magnificence of the sky, sun, moon, and stars, enter more extensively into the enjoyment of mankind, than we, perhaps, ever think, or can possibly apprehend, without frequent and extensive investigation. This beauty and splendour of the objects around us, it is ever to be remembered, is not necessary to their existence, nor to what we commonly intend by their usefulness. It is, therefore, to be regarded as a source of pleasure, gratuitously superinduced upon the general nature of the objects themselves; and, in this light, as a testimony of the divine goodness peculiarly affecting.

Still more deeply, ought we to regard this part of the Creation, as exhibiting, in the most convincing manner, *the Being and Agency of God.*

How plainly, how delightfully, how solemnly, is this glorious Being seen every where in these works of his hands! All these changes are the result of a cause, adequate to their production. The living, acting thing, called Man, is never directly perceived by other men. We see motions; and know that there is one who moves. We hear a voice; and know that there is one who speaks. We perceive actions; and know that there is an agent who gives them birth. This agent we denominate Man. So in every place, in every thing, and during every moment, we behold throughout the creation, a perpetual progress of most wonderful events; and know that an Agent, to us invisible, but adequate to their production, effectuates them all. This agent, we call God; and discern his being, character, and presence, as directly, and clearly, as we discern the being, character, and presence, of man. Thus all things hold out to every attentive eye, the living, acting, governing, *Jehovah.*

At the same time, this earthly system strongly displays *the Anger of God against the sins of men.*

Amidst all these pleasing manifestations of the Creator, the world around us furnishes, also, many proofs of his displeasure. The storm plunges multitudes in the deep. The lightning destroys its victims in a moment. The famine sweeps its millions to the grave. The volcano overwhelms towns and cities with deluges of fire. The pestilence, *walking in darkness*, drives before it whole nations into eternity: While death, both with and without the aid of these ministers, empties, once in thirty years, the world of its inhabitants. What awful, as well as decisive proofs, are here furnished, that the Maker of all things regards our race with severe and terrible displeasure! How solemnly do they impress this humiliating truth upon every serious mind! How forcibly

do they summon us to repent, and reform, that we may find mercy!

There is still another point of view, in which these works ought to be remembered on the present occasion. *Every thing in creation and providence, appears not only to be useful, but to have many uses, and to answer very many purposes.* God, so far as we can understand his agency, accomplishes his ends by the most direct, the simplest, and the fewest means.

> "In human works, though laboured on with pain,
> A thousand movements scarce one purpose gain;
> In God's, one single can its end produce,
> Yet serves to second too, some other use."*

Thus Water and Iron become means of ends innumerable. The latter enters, to a vast extent, into almost all human arts and concerns: while the former is almost every where diffused through the great system of benefits, which God has provided for mankind.

A great part of the usefulness, found in the objects of this world, arises from *the Order established among them*, and mentioned under a former head of discourse. From this order, springs all the forecast of the human mind. By observing the regular succession of causes and effects around us, we learn to judge, with a good degree of correctness, from past events, concerning those which are future. The nature of the seasons, exhibited in their past revolutions, teaches us how to prepare ourselves against both heat and cold; to sow our seed in the spring, and gather our harvests in the summer and autumn; to shelter ourselves from the inclemencies of the sky; to make the necessary provision for ourselves and our families; and to adjust, universally, the arts and business of life. By the regularity of the system, all our profitable employments are wholly directed. Without this guide, we could plan nothing; we could accomplish nothing; and should literally be unable to conjecture *what a day*, an hour, or a moment, *would bring forth.* Our existence would be a mere succession of accidents. Nor can we conceive how, in such a state, any means could be furnished, by which we might either enjoy comfort, or prolong our lives.

From the same source, arises, in a chief measure, *that full, unanswerable proof of the existence, and character, of God, which is presented by these works of his hands.* The wisdom of God is principally seen in the design, and contrivance, exhibited throughout the globe. But contrivance and design, appear only in the adaptation of means to ends: and wisdom is visible only in the choice of good ends, and of fit means to accomplish them. I have already remarked, that without this regularity, our existence would be a mere succession of accidents. This would be equally true of the whole course of events. There would be, visibly, neither means, nor ends. If second causes existed, they would be unperceived; and their efficacy, being continually variable, could never be dis-

* Essay on Man, part i. line 53.

cerned. All things, therefore, would naturally be attributed to chance. Who, then, would be able to refute the doctrines of *Epicurus;* or to prove satisfactorily the perfections, or even the existence, of God?

4thly. *How interesting an object is the destination of this world!* The Earth was designed to be the habitation of immortal beings, whose numbers, the human mind is unable to limit. Every one of these is an heir either of endless happiness or endless wo. All of them, also, have apostatized from God, and exposed themselves to final condemnation. In this state of things, this world became the theatre of the most wonderful work, which, so far as our knowledge extends, has ever existed. The Son of God descended from Heaven, and, *passing by the angels, took upon him the seed of Abraham;* suffered the distress of a humble, persecuted life; died on the cross; and was buried in the grave; to expiate the sins of men. In consequence of this expiation, the Spirit of truth has here shed his renewing influence on the human soul; and has sanctified, and will hereafter sanctify, *a multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, kindreds, and tongues.* All these, *by a patient continuance in well-doing, will seek for glory, honour, and immortality;* and will find, a new, *eternal life.* By their union to Christ, and their interest in his mediation, they will hereafter become, together with *the angels who kept their first estate,* inhabitants of the Supreme Heaven, and attendants upon the throne of God. This is a destiny, to which, so far as we are informed, no other virtuous beings will ever be raised. Thus this world is a scene of transactions, such as probably never existed in any other: and its inhabitants are heirs of glory and happiness, in which they will be rivalled only by the Angels of God.

5thly. *These considerations exhibit the unreasonableness of several Objections, made against the Divine origin of the Scriptures.*

First. *The representation of the Scriptures, that the Creation was accomplished progressively, and not instantaneously, is declared to be unworthy of God.*

It will be admitted, that *Moses* has taught, not only in the most explicit, but in the most sublime manner, that it was perfectly easy for God to create the world in an instant. *Let there be light,* said this glorious Being, *and there was light: Let there be a firmament, and there was a firmament. Let the waters be separated from the waters, and they were separated.* He, who can do these things in this manner, can do any thing in any manner, that shall please him. No other representation of power was ever to be compared with this. Nor has any one of those, who have followed *Moses,* whether inspired or uninspired, rivalled him in sublimity of narration.

But, while he exhibits the omnipotence of God in so impressive a manner, he gives us *an account of the Creation, which is both intelligible, and useful.* Had the work of Creation been instantaneously performed; it would have been totally incomprehensible

even by the Angels, who were witnesses of it: and the history of it would have been totally useless to ourselves; except merely as settling the point, that the world was created. The first verse in the Bible, would have contained the whole. Nor could any thing have been added to it with propriety, unless that God called the universe into existence by his word. How much more interesting, comprehensible, and delightful, is the whole chapter, in which that verse is contained! In a far higher proportion was the actual progress, and order, of this great work intelligible, interesting, and delightful, to *the Sons of God*, who were witnesses of its accomplishment. *They* saw, and understood, much of what was done: *we* read, and understand, not a little. The history of the Creation, as written by *Moses*, is the noblest history, which was ever written by man. With perfect simplicity it unites supreme grandeur; and has accordingly received the highest testimony of Criticism, from the time of *Longinus* to the present day.

It is further to be remembered, that by means of this order of Creation, the *Sabbath*, the great source of piety, and eternal life, to man, *was ushered into the world with a solemnity, unrivalled and infinite. God rested*, say the divine writers, *from all his works, which he created and made; the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.* What a Sabbath was this! Who, with such an example before him, can refuse to *keep this day holy unto the Lord?* Who does not see, that the very existence of this example, and all its consequent influence, arose out of the order of the Creation, recited by *Moses?*

Secondly. *Another objection, urged by Infidels against the Divine origin of the Scriptures, is derived from the date, assigned by them to the Creation.*

"Can it be supposed," say these men, "that God existed so many millions of ages, alone; and began the work of creating, only six thousand years ago?" This question has been often asked with confidence, and even with triumph. But it has been always asked without good sense, or consideration. Yet, as there are persons, who will ask it, and others who will suppose it to possess real weight; it will not be improper to give it a momentary attention. I answer then,

(In the first place) *That the Scriptures do not assert the existence of created things to have been begun at the time, when this world was made; and there is no presumption against the formation of this world at the time specified.* There is no more reason to conclude, *a priori*, that worlds may be created at different times, but must all be brought into existence co-etaneously, than there is to form the same decision concerning trees, animals, or men.

(2dly.) *If all things were created at the time, specified by Moses; then it is certain, that the Creation existed as soon as was possible.* Between the eternity of God, and any supposable date of Creation, or commencement of time, there is, there can be, no pos-

sible relation; and therefore no possible comparison. To the eternity of Him, *with whom one day is exactly as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day; who inhabiteth eternity* at once; whose duration is an omnipresent *Now;* our successive existence, and the periods by which it is reckoned, have no reference whatever. To Him, time and date have no relation, and are obviously nothing.

(3dly.) *Had the world been created at the commencement of any imaginable past period; suppose a billion of years; at the end of six thousand years from its first creation, the same objection would have been made against the date of its existence with exactly the same force.* It might then have been asked, with exactly the same propriety, "Can it be supposed, that God existed so many millions of ages alone; and began the work of creating, only six thousand years ago?" The objectors appear not to perceive, that by receding into past duration, they approach no nearer to a goal; but that while they amuse themselves with the dream of advancing towards a satisfactory limit, the same vast still expands immeasurably before them.

From the regular order of things, Infidels have also determined,

Thirdly, *That the Universe is eternal, and have hence denied the revelation of the Scriptures.*

St. Peter has taught us, that *in the last days there should be scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For, since the Fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the World.* This prediction, we ourselves see verified. There have long been, there are now, just such scoffers, just such objectors. The regular order of things, established in this world, has long been the source of pertinacious opposition to the word, the government, and even the existence, of God; and the design of the opposition has uniformly been to overthrow *the promise*, and the probability, *of his coming* to Judgment.

The general doctrine of these men has been this: "The materials of the universe were self-existent and eternal. By means of these materials, fate, necessity, destiny, or a blind succession of causes, have produced such beings and events, as have hitherto existed." At the same time, another class of Infidels pronounce all such beings and events to be *the result of mere chance.* Regular as the present system is; they professedly find in it sufficient irregularity to warrant them in making this conclusion. Singular, indeed, must be that state of things, which is sufficiently regular to support the former of these doctrines, and sufficiently irregular to warrant the latter. According to these schemes, taken together, there neither is, nor can be, any proof of the existence and government of God, either in the present, or in any supposable, state of things. The only remaining mode, by which the Creator can make himself known to mankind, is *Revelation;* and the possibility

of this, several of these men roundly deny. *Men*, indeed, make known themselves to each other, every day, by speaking, moving, and acting. Even common modesty, as well as common sense, could not, one would think, believe this to be beyond the power, and skill, of the omnipotent and omniscient *Creator of men.*

The two schemes of existence, here specified, have been sufficiently examined in the second of these discourses. All that I have intended here, was barely to remind you of the manner, in which men of this character have thought proper to reason; and to show you, that their views of the universe, and its Author, flow from the heart, and not from the head.

Fourthly. *Infidels object the Miracles, recorded in the Scriptures, against their divine origin; on the ground, that there is an universal presumption against the existence of a miracle.*

Those, which are styled the laws of nature, were, it will be remembered, subsequent in their existence to the Creation. This work could not, therefore, be in any sense conformed to them; but was an immediate act of Divine power; absolutely new, conformed to no analogy, and existing in a manner wholly miraculous. What is thus true of the work of Creation, at large, is equally true of the act, by which each individual thing, originally created, was brought into being. There have, therefore, been many millions of miraculous productions; and in this vast number of instances, miracles have been certainly wrought. Of course, there is the strongest presumption of their existence in other cases. We know that they have been actually wrought, when there was a sufficient occasion; and cannot rationally doubt, that on every other such occasion they would be wrought again. Nothing more, therefore, can be necessary to prove their existence, than fair unexceptionable testimony.

6thly. *If this great work is thus wonderful; how wonderful, how glorious must be its Author!*

All these things, *He* contrived and executed. All of them are merely pictures, or archetypes, of the thoughts, originally existing in the Uncreated Mind. Whatever is beautiful, useful, majestic, or exalted, is only a display of the beauty, excellence, greatness, and sublimity, of Divine perfection. How naturally do our first Parents exclaim, in the language of the great English Poet,

> "These are thy glorious works, Parent of good,
> Almighty! thine this universal frame,
> Thus wondrous fair; thyself how wondrous then,
> Unspeakable!"

What an astonishing act must it have been to create a world, its furniture and its inhabitants, together with all their natures and qualities; and to prepare them for all their successive operations many of these inhabitants destined to live, and many of these operations destined to affect them, throughout eternity.

What a Mind must that be, which could contain an exact, as

well as comprehensive, scheme of all the parts, characteristical qualities, and operations, of such a work; which, without confusion, or mistake, could see through the whole, and discern every consequence, even in the remotest ages of being, which could so exactly prescribe the nature, determine the operations, and limit the number of parts, however great, however minute; and in the progress of duration find no cause for the least change in the work, or the least deviation from the system!

Such are the views, which justly arise from the contemplation of our world, as it now is. How much more forcibly would they have been impressed on our minds, had we lived in the same world, as it came fresh and fair from the hands of the Creator, when He surveyed every thing, that he had done, and pronounced it *very good!* How delightfully should we have been affected by the objects, contained in the present world, had we been superior to death, and destined to live for ever; had we been planted in *Eden*, where the air, the earth, and the waters, teemed with life; and immortality breathed in the winds, flowed in the streams, ripened in the fruits, and exhaled from the flowers! At the side of our first Parents, and encircled by Paradise, how instinctively should we have exclaimed, *Worthy art thou, O Lord, to receive blessing, and glory, and honour, and power, for thou hast made all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created!*

The source of all these wonders, is the Lord Jesus Christ. *For by Him were all things created, that are in Heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be Thrones, or Dominions, or Principalities, or Powers; all things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things; and by him all things consist.* To him, therefore, is this admiration and glory due; and to him the obedience, confidence, and worship, which the Creator of the universe justly challenges from his Intelligent Creation.

SERMON XXII.

CREATION.—MAN.

GENESIS i. 26, 27.—*And God said, Let us make Man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created Man in his own image; in the image of God created He him: male and female, created He them.*

IN several preceding discourses, I have considered *the formation of the Heavens, the Character and Circumstances of Angels, both Virtuous and Fallen,* and *the Creation of the World, in which we dwell.* The next subject of our investigation, is *Man.* This subject, though far less splendid than several of the preceding themes of contemplation, is yet peculiarly interesting to *us.* Every thing that relates to it, must directly and intimately concern ourselves; and nothing of this nature can be, to us, uninvested with serious importance, or undeserving of our particular attention.

Nor is this the only point of view, in which Man claims a high regard. God himself has bestowed an attention upon them, which has not been given even to angels themselves. Angels, when they fell, were banished for ever from the presence and favour of their Creator. But, when Man had fallen, the Son of God descended from Heaven; assumed our nature; lived in this world a suffering life; and died a shameful death; that we might be saved. From the grave, also, He arose on the third day; ascended to Heaven; sat down at the right hand of God the Father; and became *Head over all things* for the benefit of his Church. Angels themselves are employed by Him in promoting this mighty work; and *are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them, who shall be heirs of salvation.* For men, Heaven, shut to the Apostate Angels, is again opened. For Man, also, when *the earth and all the works that are therein, shall be burnt up,* and *the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved; new heavens, and a new earth,* like the fabled Phœnix out of its ashes, shall arise, *in which righteousness shall dwell* for ever.

Man, therefore, notwithstanding his humble origin, and guilty character, is an object, rendered highly important on account of the peculiar regard, exhibited to him by his Maker. At the same time, we ought, in every general estimate of man, to remember, that at his creation, he was endued with powers, placed in circumstances, and destined to enjoyments, of no inconsiderable distinction and glory. This reference we are, in every such case, taught to make by *St. James;* who, speaking of the abuses of the tongue, and of cursing our fellow-men as one of those abuses, mentions the original character of human nature as a consideration, plainly en-

hancing both the absurdity, and the guilt, of this evil conduct. *Therewith*, says this Apostle, *bless we God, even the Father, and therewith curse we men who* ARE, or, as in the Greek, *who* WERE, *made in the similitude of God.*

In the text, the Author of all things is exhibited as holding a consultation, concerning the creation of man. *And God said, Let us make Man in our image, after our likeness.* The work of Creation is in the Scriptures indifferently attributed to the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY SPIRIT. That it is attributed to the FATHER, will not be questioned. That it is attributed to the SON, and to the SPIRIT, can no more be questioned, if we allow the Scriptures to speak the customary language of men; or, indeed, if we allow them to speak language, that has any defensible construction, or any meaning.

The text declares to us, in a clear and decisive manner, that more persons than one were concerned in the design of creating Man; and that some Person, or Persons, were addressed by the Speaker. Various attempts have, indeed, been made, to avoid the proof, furnished by this passage to the doctrine of the TRINITY; and in this manner to force out of view the obvious, and only, meaning of the terms. But none of these attempts, which I have seen, will bear examination.

In the first place, the *style royal* is not adopted here. This is the use of the plural personal pronoun, instead of the singular, to denote an individual; a practice, adopted by modern Princes with an intention to distinguish themselves from inferior mortals. He, who can believe, that JEHOVAH would in this manner violate the propriety of language, to distinguish himself, and countenance human pride and folly, in its ridiculous labours for the acquisition of personal superiority; must, to say the least, have formed extraordinary views, concerning the character of his CREATOR. That God has not acted in this manner, is unanswerably clear from the universal tenor of the Scriptural language. Only a single specimen, and that a doubtful one, of the style in question, can be found in the sacred writings. Nor is this in the Hebrew style; but copied from the decree of a Persian monarch, many hundred years after the Pentateuch was written. The simplicity of the Scriptural language, is supreme. Every thing is spoken of as it is; and in the mere phraseology of nature. A *Jew*, if the passage had been intended to speak in this manner, would hardly have been able to discover its signification.

But what places the point in question out of dispute, is the declaration of the same glorious Being, in the third chapter and twenty-second verse; *And the Lord God said, Behold, the man has become as one of Us, to know good and evil.* It will not be pretended, that even a modern Prince, when declaring that one of his subjects had become like himself, would say, "This man has become as one of *Us*."

Our Saviour, who understood this subject incomparably better than these Commentators, has explained to us this phraseology in a manner, which solves every rational doubt. Speaking, as *St. John* declares, *John* xii. 41, in Isaiah vi. 8; He says, *Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?* Again, addressing his FATHER, *John* xvii. 21, He says, *That they all may be one; as thou Father art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in Us.* And again, verse 22, *That they may be one, even as* WE *are one.* In all these instances, the same Person uses the same language with the same, and that both obvious and exact, propriety.

Secondly. *This phraseology, also, is not addressed to Angels.* Angels could not be addressed in this manner; for such an address would have had neither truth nor meaning. In the work of creating Man, Angels had as little agency, as the Man who was to be created. Suppose, instead of *the proposal* to Angels to unite with God in creating Man, we were to substitute *a history* of this transaction. We should then say, that God and his Angels created Man; and, therefore, that Angels performed a part of this work; or were, in some sense and degree, the Creators of man. The absurdity of this account needs no explanation. It is as really, it is equally, absurd to suppose, that God would address Angels in this manner; and propose to them to occupy themselves, or to be in any way concerned, in this work; in which both He and they knew it was neither proper, nor possible, for them to be at all concerned; as to suppose, that they actually performed a part of it. It was also, according to every Scriptural account of the Creator, and of Angels, wholly improper for Him to associate them with himself in a work, which was exclusively his own. Nor will it be asserted, that God here proposes to create man in *the image of Angels.* In verse 2, it is said, *God created man in his own image.* In addition to this, it is to be remembered, that Angels are not mentioned in this history, till a considerable time afterwards; and, therefore, if *they* had been intended, this could not be known: Whereas, in the sense in which these words have been customarily interpreted, the Persons, spoken of in the text, are expressly named. *In the beginning Aleim,* (the *Covenanters**) *created the heaven, and the earth.*

I have observed, that the Author of all things is exhibited in the text as solemnly consulting concerning the creation of Man. *Let us make man,* said the Divine Workman, *in our image, after our likeness;* not, "Let man exist," or "Let there be man;" as He had before said, *Let there be light, Let there be a firmament, Let the earth bring forth grass:* and so on, with respect to every thing else, which was made. This solemn manner of introducing Man into being, was strongly expressive of his importance, and very honourable to his character. The distinction, made between him

* Parkhurst.

and all the preceding objects of creation, was intentional; and declared him to be of more consequence than them all.

This subject I will now endeavour to illustrate in the following observations.

I. *The Time, at which Man was created, is strongly expressive of the importance of his character.*

The Creation of the world was now completed. *The heavens were finished, and all the host of them.* The sun was constituted a perpetual fountain of light; and set in the firmament to rule over the day, and to distribute warmth and life, activity and enjoyment, to all the sentient inhabitants of this world. In his absence, *the moon walked in brightness, to rule the night;* and shed on the earth a softer, but not less beautiful, splendour, than that of the day. The stars, also, spreading their glory throughout the sky, delightfully illustrated the wisdom of the Creator, and rejoiced over the inferior works of his hands.

The whole process, also, of forming the earth, of clothing it with verdure, of replenishing it with animals, of providing the means of their subsistence and comfort, and of arraying it with beauty and magnificence, was brought to an end. Fresh from the perfect hand of its Creator, it was a work of such excellence, that the eye of infinite Wisdom, surveying all its parts, saw that it was *very good.* It was a habitation, which Angels beheld with delight; a palace fitted for the residence of an immortal, virtuous, happy being; of him, who was to be made in the image of God; of him, who was to have dominion over the earth, and every thing which it contained.

This mighty preparation conveys to us high ideas concerning the object, for which so much was done. God does nothing but with the strictest propriety. The bounty, which here flowed in such copious streams, was directed by infinite wisdom, as well as poured out by infinite goodness. While, on the one hand, it was glorious to its Author; it was, on the other, perfectly suited to the character of the recipient. The recipient, therefore, was of such a character, as to be the proper object of these illustrious communications.

II. *The Nature of Man is a still more interesting object of our attention.*

Man is a compound existence, made up of two great parts; the *Body* and the *Soul*, or *Spirit.* The Body was formed of the dust of the ground; and can claim no higher origin, than that of the animals, by which we are surrounded; is possessed only, of the same life and activity; and is the subject of the same suffering, and enjoyment. Still, it is a frame of a most wonderful nature. The parts, of which it is composed; their number; their various natures, dependencies, operations, and uses; the arrangement, by which they are formed into a system, a world within itself; the faculties, attached to it, of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and feeling;

its capacity of pain and pleasure; the warnings, which it is fitted to give of approaching or commencing evil; and the power, which it so variously possesses of self-restoration; are all wonderful, mysterious, and strongly declaratory of the skill and goodness of the Creator. Nor ought we, on this occasion, to forget the peculiar structure of the person; the beauty of the complexion; the symmetry of the members; particularly, that, displayed in the features of the face; the gracefulness, and dignity of the motions; nor the power of the countenance to express the thoughts and feelings of the mind. By this last mentioned attribute, the face becomes an index to the character of the invisible man; and shows, not only his ideas, but his emotions also; his virtue and vice, his loveliness and deformity; and, in a word, whatever his fellow-men are interested to know.

All these things were at first formed for endless duration. The Body, like the mind, was originally incapable of decomposition or decay. Its life was a mere progress of youth, and bloom, and beauty; and disease, and death, had not yet marked it for their prey.

Of a still more wonderful nature, was the human Soul, or Spirit. This, indeed, would naturally be expected, from the peculiar description of it given in the text. *Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.* And again, *So God created man in his own image; in the image of God created He him.* It will not be doubted, that the image of God was impressed, and was capable of being impressed on the soul only, and not on the body. As little ought it to be doubted, that this phraseology attributes to the soul a distinguished importance; not a little enhanced by these repetitions. Since this peculiar language embodies all the important characteristics of the human soul, I shall conform the observations, which it will be necessary to make at the present time on this subject, to the single scheme of explaining these declarations in the text.

The Image of God, in which Man is here said to have been created, denotes especially the following things.

1st. *That the Soul, or Spirit, was created a pure uncompounded substance.*

It is impossible, that thought should be the act of a plurality of subjects; since it is, in its own nature, perfectly simple and indivisible. It will be readily acknowledged, that such is the Nature of God; and that the same nature is also possessed by Angels. There is as little reason to deny, that it is also the nature of the human soul. On this subject, however, I shall dwell more extensively in the following discourse; and shall here consider it as granted.

In this important particular, it will be seen, that the soul differs entirely from all material substances. These are, universally, collections of innumerable atoms; and therefore become, whenever the bond, which unites them, is destroyed, subjects of dissolution. Nothing more is necessary to the destruction of the material form,

than the mere separation of its parts. The Soul, being perfectly simple, is incapable of suffering this process, and cannot perish, unless by annihilation. As there is no example of annihilation within the experience of man, no reason can be drawn from analogy to support the supposition, that the existence of the Soul will ever be terminated.

2dly. *The Soul was formed a* THINKING *substance.*

St. Paul, *Col.* iii. 10, says, *And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of Him that created him. To know*, therefore, the great exercise of thought, *is*, in one respect of high importance, *to be like God.* Thinking beings, are the only beings, who are active; who originate changes in the universe; who commence operations; who contrive useful purposes; who direct unconscious objects to their proper uses; and who are the subjects of enjoyment or suffering.

Bare thought is not, however, all that is here to be understood. Animals think; but are not, still, created in the image of God. The broad distinction between Men and animals is, that the former discern the nature of moral good and evil, and can, therefore, be made, and are actually made, subjects of law and moral government; of both which, the latter are absolutely incapable.

Even this is not the whole of what is intended, either by *Moses*, or *Paul.* The knowledge which *they* consider as comprised in the image of God, is *that of a sanctified, or virtuous mind;* such a mind as *Adam* possessed at his creation. It is the knowledge, possessed by that *love, which rejoiceth in the truth;* which is, of course, unprejudiced and impartial; which allows argument and evidence their true weight; and which, therefore, perceives, and admits, truth, especially moral truth, as it is. This, and this only, is the manner, in which *Adam* knew; and in which, to a considerable extent, every sanctified mind also knows. But this knowledge is, in some respects, essentially different from that, possessed by *men in*, what the Scriptures call, *their natural state. The natural man*, says *St. Paul*, or as it is rendered by *Dr. Macknight*, the *animal man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

A most important characteristic of this knowledge is, that it discerns the glory and excellence of God, displayed in his Works, and especially in his Word. By the natural man, every thing of this nature is unknown. To the renewed man, every such thing is real and obvious, whenever the objects, in which it exists, are presented to his eye, and placed within the grasp of his understanding. This difference does not arise from difference of capacity. The capacity of the natural man is, in innumerable instances, greater, and his power of discerning, stronger, than that of the renewed man. The reason, why he views spiritual objects in so imperfect and unhappy a manner, lies supremely in his disposition.

His biasses against their true nature, are intense; and his views, therefore, always oblique and delusive. When *Adam* was created, he was a friend of God; saw his character with friendly eyes; and therefore, discerned its excellence.

3dly. *That the soul was formed with Dispositions or Affections.*

God himself is possessed of infinite affections; of infinite love to good, and of infinite hatred to evil; and is the subject of infinite joy in himself, his designs, and his works.

In this respect, also, the Soul was formed to resemble its Maker: an endowment of more importance, than even knowledge itself. These are the great spring, whence proceed all the action of minds; the directory of our contemplation; the cause of our knowledge; and the source of our virtue, usefulness, and enjoyment. Man, without them, would be a clod; and the world a desert.

4thly. *That the Affections of the Soul were duly attempered and directed; or, in other words, were Virtuous.*

In Eph. iv. 24, St. Paul says, *And that ye put on the new man, which, after God,* (κατα Θεου, *after the image of God*) *is created in righteousness, and true holiness.* Holiness is that state of the affections, in which the soul loves what God loves. God loves himself, his creation, its interests, and every thing which promotes them; on the contrary, He hates every thing, by which they are destroyed, or injured. Such is the Virtue of the human soul; such its love; such its hatred; whenever it is enstamped with the image of God. Such was the character of *Adam* at his creation.

5thly. *That the Soul had Dominion over the world.*

God is the Infinite Ruler. Man was constituted the ruler of this lower world, with a delegated dominion over all its inhabitants. The government of God is wholly righteous, reasonable, and benevolent. Such only was that, which Man at his creation was disposed to exercise. All creatures under his government, were uninvaded, uninjured, and happy.

6thly. *That the Soul of the first Man was possessed of Spiritual Enjoyment.*

By this I intend, *that enjoyment, which springs from affections harmonizing with the conscience, and with each other.* In such a soul, every affection is delightful; and all its views, purposes, and pursuits, are just, sincere, benevolent, and lovely. Love, the controlling affection, however various may be its exercises, is only a succession of varied pleasure. Its two great constituents are, *delight in the objects beloved,* and *a desire to do them good.* The more excellent, dignified, and enduring, these objects are, the more noble, pure, and rapturous, is the enjoyment, which it derives from them. Love to God, therefore, transcendently the greatest and most excellent of all objects, is capable of becoming in itself, and in its consequences, higher enjoyment than any other. At the same time, every other affection is, in such a mind, perfectly accordant with this commanding one. Other objects are all duly loved; and every

exercise of the heart is attended by the delightful sense of rectitude.

To such a mind, also, all the various displays of wisdom, power, and goodness, in the works of creation and providence, are illustrious sources of pleasure. Wherever the eye turns its glance, God is seen; and, wherever He is seen, He is seen with delight. The endlessly diversified forms of beauty, grandeur, and glory, in the works of God are, and are regarded as being, only exhibitions of infinite excellence, made to delight, improve, and ennoble, the Intelligent system.

7thly. *That the soul was created Immortal.*

Both the Body and Mind of Man, were originally formed, and destined, for Immortality. After the apostacy, however, the Body was sentenced *to return to the dust;* as being rendered wholly unfit to exist in the new creation. But the soul was left possessed of the never-dying principle, with which it was originally endowed; was incapable of dissolution; and was indestructible, except by the exertions of Almighty Power.

Thus was man, as he came from the hands of his Maker, a creature, endued with high and glorious perfections. To complete his happiness, *God created him Male and Female:* and this not only for the multiplication of his species, but also for the interchange of those amiable affections, and those offices of kindness, which arise from the inherent diversity of character in the sexes. In the emphatical language of the Scriptures, they were made *help-meets* for each other; and were designed to furnish, mutually, a social and superior happiness, of which solitude is incapable. A more delicate and beautiful form was united in the Woman, to a mind, possessing gentler and lovelier affections, a more refined taste, and more elegant sentiments. In the Man, a firmer and stronger frame was joined to a mind more robust, more patient of toil, and more equal to difficulties. In each, the other was intended to find that, which was wanting in itself; and to approve, love, and admire, both qualities and actions, of which itself was imperfectly capable: while in their reciprocations of tenderness, and good-will, each beheld every blessing mightily enhanced, and intensely endeared.

From these considerations, are naturally derived the following,

REMARKS.

1st. *How illustrious a being was Man, as he came from the hands of his Maker!*

With what dignified attributes was he endued! For what high pursuits was he qualified! To what sublime enjoyments was he destined! In him was found, in an important sense, the *End* of this earthly system. Without Man, the world, its furniture, and its inhabitants, would have existed in vain. Whatever skill, power, and goodness, were displayed by the Creating Hand; there was, before the formation of Man, none to understand, admire, love, enjoy, or

praise, the Creator. The earth was clothed with beauty: the landscape unfolded its delightful scenes: the sky spread its magnificent curtains: the sun *travelled in the greatness of his strength:* the moon and stars solemnly displayed the glorious wisdom of their Author: without an eye to gaze, or a heart to contemplate. A magnificent habitation was, indeed, built and furnished; but no Tenant was found. Brutes were the only beings, which could enjoy at all; and their enjoyment was limited to animal gratification.

But Man was separated from all earthly creatures, by being formed an Intelligent being. His mind could trace the skill and glory of the Creator in the works of his hands; and, from the nature of the work, could understand, admire, and adore the Workman. His thoughts could rise to God, and wander through eternity. The universe was to him a mirror, by which he saw reflected every moment, in every place, and in every form, the beauty, greatness, and excellence, of JEHOVAH. To Him, his affections and his praises rose, more sweet than the incense of the morning; and made no unhappy harmony with the loftier music of Heaven. He was the Priest of this great world; and offered the morning and evening sacrifice of thanksgiving for the whole earthly creation. Of this creation, he was also the Lord: not the Tyrant; but the rightful, just, benevolent Sovereign. The subjection of the inferior creatures to him, was voluntary; and productive of nothing but order, peace, and happiness. With these endowments and privileges, he was placed in Paradise; no unhappy resemblance of Heaven itself: and surrounded by every thing, *which was good for food, or pleasant to the eye*, or fragrant to the smell. In an atmosphere, impregnated with life; amid streams in which life flowed; amid fruits, in which life bloomed, and ripened; encircled by ever-living beauty and magnificence; peaceful within; safe without; and conscious of Immortality; he was destined to labour, only that he might be useful and happy, and to contemplate the wonders of the universe, and worship its glorious Author, as his prime and professional employment. He was an image of the invisible God; created to be like him in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, his most illustrious attributes; and like him, to exercise dominion over the works of his hands.

In this situation also, removed far from death and disease, from sorrow and fear, he was formed for endless improvement. His mind, like that of Angels, was capable of continual expansion, refinement, and elevation; and his life, of perpetual exaltation in worth, usefulness, and honour. God was his Visiter: Angels were his companions.

To complete this system of delight, he was created, to be the Parent of countless millions, who, like himself, were all to be sinless. They were also to inhabit the same world of peace, life, and happiness; to possess the same immortality; and to share in the same endless enjoyment. At the head of this lower creation,

he was to stand, and survey this great globe, filled with his own offspring; and to see the whole immense family, like himself, children of God, and heirs of his everlasting love.

2dly. *How greatly has Man fallen from his original state!*

What proofs of humiliation are visible in every thing, found in the present world!

In our bodies, particularly, what seeds of weakness, distress, and decay! The first proofs that we possess life, are the cries of pain and suffering, inarticulately uttered by the Infant, just entered into the world. How often does even that infant agonize, and expire, in the cradle! If he passes into Childhood, how many pains does he undergo; how many fears; how many sorrows! How frequently is he carried, while a child, to the grave! Should he arrive at Youth, what a train of new evils is he obliged to encounter! and in how many instances does the canker-worm, or the frost, nip the blossom, and wither it beneath the fond eye of parental love! Should he become a Man: sickness, pain, and sorrow, still hunt him through every course of life; and not unfrequently infix their fangs in his heart-strings: while Death, always watching for his prey, descends when he is least aware, and seizes, and bears away, the miserable victim! Should he live to Old Age: his strength declines, his face is furrowed with wrinkles, and his head whitened with hoary locks; his body bends toward the earth, from which it was taken; and, exhausted by suffering, he resigns his breath, and is conveyed to the dark and narrow house; devoured by worms, dissolved by corruption, and changed into his original dust!

His mind, in the mean time, the sport of evil, ungovernable passions, is ignorant, wild, wayward; the seat of a thousand errors, weaknesses, and follies. With its follies, its sins keep at least an equal pace. Selfishness in many forms, all of them odious, distresses the parental eye, even in infancy. In childhood, in youth, in manhood, it is seen in new varieties of operation, and new appearances of deformity. Pride and ambition, avarice and sensuality, pollute and debase the man in early stages of life; and all increase their savage, brutal control, as he advances in his progress. At the same time, envy, fraud, deceit, violence, and cruelty, mould him into a monster; and scarcely permit us to believe, that he was once formed in the image of God. Where is now the mild, benevolent, equitable, dominion, exercised by our great Progenitor over his happy empire? Where the peace between Man and the inferior inhabitants of the earth? The chief traces of his footsteps through the animal world, are oppression, blood, and death.

In the Moral World, what scenes of pollution, fraud, and tyranny, of war and ravage, are every where displayed! What groans of anguish have been heard from one end of heaven to the other, and from the apostacy to the present hour!

In the Natural World, what a host of enemies to Man are arrayed by famine and disease, the storm, the earthquake, and the volcano! Even his breath, his food, his pleasure, are all means of his destruction.

Where is his purity, justice, truth, and good-will? Where his piety; his morning praise; his evening incense? Where his converse with God; his familiarity with Angels? Men are now the family of Adam; but how different a family from that, which has been described! Were the great Ancestor of Mankind to rise from the dead, and cast his eyes over this earth; what a race of children would he behold! Accompany him in your imagination to the retreats of drunkenness, gluttony, and pollution. Could he believe, that the wretches, burrowed in these foul recesses, sprang from him, who once offered up the worship of Paradise? Enter with him into a hall of justice; and see him ponder in silent amazement the terrible exhibitions of fraud and falsehood, private injustice, and personal cruelty. Behold him mark with a failing eye the lowering gloom of the gibbet, the horrid recesses of the Gaol, and the felon crimes which they were destined to reward. Follow him to the throne of Tyranny; and see his bosom heave with emotions unutterable, while he watches the devastation of human happiness, and human hope, accomplished by the iron-hand of Power; man, blasted and withered by its touch; and the fiend himself rioting on sorrow, tears, and death. Finally, adventure with him to the field of battle; and see him tremble and faint at the shouts and groans, at the sight of immeasurable fury, carnage, and wo. How would his heart rend asunder with agony; how would his eyes weep blood; at such a view of this miserable world! at the remembrance, that both the Authors, and the subjects, of these sufferings were his own offspring. Where would he now find his Eden; his virtue; his Immortality?

3dly. *How desirable would it be to regain the blessings, originally bestowed on Man!*

The Paradisiacal state has been an object of high estimation to all men. Our first parents were wise, virtuous and happy. They were at peace with God; enjoyed his presence; and received, continually, communications of his favour. They were companions of Angels; and shared their conversation, their friendship, and their joys. Alike were they free from pain, sickness, sorrow, and death; safe from fear and hatred, injustice and cruelty; and superior to meanness, sloth, intemperance, and pollution. They were also immortal; were destined to dwell in a perpetual Eden; were surrounded always by beauty, life, and fragrance; and were employed only in knowing, loving, and enjoying. To regain all these things, would, indeed, "be a consummation, devoutly to be wished." But God has offered them all to us; has commanded, has besought us to receive them; and has given his Son to die, that we might obtain the glorious possession. We *may*, therefore,

regain the blessings of that Paradise, the loss of which we so deeply lament, and the splendour of which is, at times, the delightful theme of our contemplation, and the most fascinating ornament of descriptive song.

The best of its blessings we may in a great measure regain, even here. Sin blasted all the bloom and beauty of the primitive state, and changed the garden of God into a desolate wilderness. This happy place was formed to be the residence of virtue; and virtue can again call forth all its glories, even on the face of this dreary world. *Godliness has the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come.* The piety, truth, and benevolence, which adorned our first Parents, would again call down similar blessings from Heaven. What a world would this become, if such were again the disposition of man! How transporting a deliverance, to be freed from all the sins and sufferings of this melancholy state; and to enjoy, wherever we roved, an approving conscience, serenity of soul, an unspotted life, kindness interchanged with all men, universal peace, mild and equitable government, and the pure, constant, and delightful worship of the Infinite Benefactor. To escape from our present, melancholy, stormy, bloody world, to such a state, would be to quit, for a palace of splendour and delight, the gloom of a vault, hung round with midnight, and peopled with corpses; a bedlam, where the eye of frenzy flashed, the tongue vibrated with malice, and chains clanked, in dreadful concert, to rage and blasphemy; a dungeon, haunted with crimes, teeming with curses, filled with fiends in the human shape, and opening its doors only to the gibbet and the grave.

4thly. *How glorious does the Redeemer appear in the contemplation of this subject!*

Christ formed our first Parents, endued them with unspotted holiness; and invested them with immortal life. Christ planted Eden for their possession; and placed them in the enjoyment of all its felicity. Christ gave them the dominion of this lower world; and entitled them to the company of the heavenly host. All these blessings they lost by their apostacy; and, with their apostacy, the loss, also, has descended to their posterity. To restore our ruined race to the enjoyment of these blessings, Christ, with infinite compassion, left his own glory, lived in our world a frail, suffering man, and died a death of shame and agony.

He, who created Paradise at first, can create it again. He, who gave immortal life and youth; He who communicated spiritual knowledge, refined affections, and spotless holiness, to our first Parents, can communicate them to us. By creating them at first, He has proved, that he is able; by becoming incarnate, living and dying for our sakes, He has proved, that he is willing.

For this end, He has assumed the government of all things. *In his Father's house*, He has told us, *are many mansions.* To that happy residence, *He has gone before to prepare a place for us.*

Nay, He has declared, that He will *create new heavens and a new earth*, for the reception of those, who trust in him, and *love his appearing*. In this new world, He has assured us, *there shall be no more death nor sorrow, nor crying, nor any more pain: for all* these *former* evil *things shall* then *have passed away*. In this happy region, the *righteousness*, which the Paradise below the Sun was destined to reward, *will dwell for ever*. There the Tree of life blossoms, and bears anew: and there Immortality flows again in *the pure river of life*. There *the sun no more goes down; neither does the moon withdraw itself; for Jehovah is the everlasting light* of his children, and *their God their glory*. From that delightful world the Redeemer cries, *Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me*. Oh! that every heart present may answer, *Even so, Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.*

SERMON XXIII.

THE SOUL NOT MATERIAL.

GENESIS ii 7.—*And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*

IN my last discourse, I considered the creation of man, under these two heads:

1st. *The character of the Creator;* and,

2dly. *The nature of the Being which was created.*

Under the latter head, I observed, that *man*, the Being which was created, *was composed of two entirely distinct parts, commonly termed the body and soul.* Of the *latter*, I also observed, that it *was a simple, uncompounded, immaterial substance:* being in *this respect, as well as in others, made in the image, or after the likeness, of God.* This assertion, I regard as being the amount of that, which is contained in the text. I am well aware, that the text itself has been variously construed. Instead, however, of considering these different constructions, I shall attempt to settle the true meaning, by appealing directly to an interpreter, whose opinions will not be disputed. The Apostle *Paul* quotes this passage in the following manner: *For thus it is written, the first man, Adam,* εγενετο εις ψυχην ζωσαν, *was made or became a living soul.* This quotation determines, in my view, absolutely, that the text is accurately rendered into our language by the translators.

The doctrine, which I consider as contained in the text, has also been abundantly disputed. Three entirely different opinions have been formed on this subject.

The first is, that which I have already advanced; viz. *that man is an Immaterial substance, an Intelligent, Voluntary being; the subject of attributes, the author of actions, and destined to immortality.*

The second is, *that man is a Material, thinking, voluntary being; differing in nothing, but his modification and its effects, from other material substances.* Some of those who hold this scheme, believe him immortal; while others limit his existence to the present world.

The third is, *that man is neither of these, but a mere succession, or Chain,* as the abettors of it express themselves. *of Ideas and Exercises.*

That something is true with regard to this subject, must be admitted; and that all these schemes cannot be true. I would willingly have avoided the discussion of a subject so metaphysical; but, when I observe the importance which it has assumed in

modern times; and especially when I see theological doctrines of very high import derived from the two last of these schemes, as their proper consequences; I feel myself obliged to give the subject a place in this system of discourses.

In the discussion, upon which I am entering, I shall pursue the following plan: viz.

I shall attempt to disprove the two last of these doctrines, and in that way, to establish the first. One of the three is undoubtedly true. If the two last are false, the first is of course true.

I. Then, *I assert that the soul is not material.*

It will be necessary, in order to exhibit the truth of this proposition in the most convincing light, to prove the falsehood of the opposite doctrine, in all the forms in which it has been maintained. This, therefore, I shall attempt.

1st. *Atoms, in their original state, do not think.*

Our senses give us the amplest evidence of this fact; so ample, that no man ever disbelieved it, who was not an idiot, or a maniac. At the same time, the proposition admits of a direct demonstration. Thought is in its nature perfectly simple and indivisible. But, if each atom were a thinking being, millions of thoughts would exist in such a compound of them, as man.

2dly. *Atoms do not think in any Aggregate, or under any Organization.*

(1st.) *That a mere Accumulation of atoms cannot think, unless the original atoms were possessed of thought, is self-evident.* If they do not think, when separate, we are intuitively certain, that *mere juxta-position* cannot give them the power of thought.

(2dly.) *Atoms cannot derive thought from any Relative Position.*

Suppose one atom placed above, beneath, or on either side of another: it is intuitively certain, that, if they did not think before they were thus posited, neither of these positions, nor any other, can have the least influence towards producing thought in either of them. What is thus true of two, is equally true of every supposable number.

3dly. *Matter cannot derive thought from Attenuation.*

The attenuation of matter is made up wholly of *the distance* and *the minuteness*, of its particles. That *distance* has no influence on this subject, has been already shown. That *the minuteness* of the corpuscles has no influence on it, is clear from this fact: that the original atoms, which have been proved to be unpossessed of thought, are the most minute divisions of matter, which are possible. That the *distance and minuteness compounded*, do not influence it, is certain, because, if thought depends on neither of these, it cannot depend on both united: for *nothing*, repeated ever so often, is still *nothing*. It is also evident to our senses from the facts, that *air*, *heat*, and *light*, approximate no nearer to thought, than *stones*, *lead*, or *earth*. When, therefore, men speak of the soul as a material substance, eminently *refined*, *tenuous*, *subtile*, or

etherial, they speak without meaning: for all these are still the descriptions of mere attenuations of matter, or matter attenuated; and it is clearly certain, that no attenuation of matter can have the least efficacy towards enabling it to think.

4thly. *Thought cannot be the result of the Chymical properties of matter.*

It is not inherent in any of *the elements*, which chymistry has hitherto discovered. All these are mere collections of Atoms; and are, therefore, absolutely incogitative: no one of their attributes having the least resemblance to thought.

It cannot be the result of *their operations*. The elements of matter operate by *their powers, or attributes*. These powers, by whatever names they are called, and however diversified in their operations, are only *two; attraction and repulsion*. But it is certain, that the only influence, which these powers can have on corpuscles, must be originally contained in the powers themselves. But nothing is more certain, than that there is no resemblance to thought, either in the operation of *drawing one particle of matter to another*, or in that of *forcing one particle of matter from another;* nor in *the capacity* of thus drawing, or being drawn, nor in that of thus repelling, or being repelled. But, if the powers themselves, and the particles in which they inhere, possess no resemblance of thought, they can never communicate thought to each other. What they have not, they cannot give.

Further, the only possible results of chymical attraction and repulsion, arise solely from motion, relative position, condensation, and attenuation. But it has already been shown, that neither of the three last can have the least influence towards enabling matter to think. Every result of chymical powers and operations, hitherto explained, has been satisfactorily explained to be the effect of attraction and repulsion; nor is there the least reason to believe, that there is any other chymical power.

5thly. *Thought is not the result of Motion.*

Motion is *a change of place, or relative position;* or *a continued succession of such changes*. It has been already shown, that no relative position can have any possible influence towards the production of thought; and that particles, if not originally cogitative, cannot become so by any possible relative position; nor by any distance from each other, whether greater or less. Of course, it is certain, that no change of position, which is nothing but the mere assumption of a new position, or a variation of distance, and, therefore, that no succession of such changes, can have any influence: for motion is nothing but this succession of changes. Accordingly, a cannon ball approximates no nearer to thought by moving at the rate of four hundred and twenty miles an hour, than when lodged in the chamber of a cannon: the air when moving with the swiftness of sound, than when at rest: the electrical fluid, or the rays of light, than brass, marble, or dust.

As motion cannot contribute at all to thought; so no *combination of motions*, however complicated and diversified, can have any such efficacy. *Organic motion*, therefore, though so multiform and mysterious, as to perplex our minds, and to leave us, in a sense, lost, when contemplating it, in admiration, being only a combination of simple motions, each of which has no tendency towards the production of thought, has not in any degree this tendency, however diversified, or however mysteriously combined.

6thly. *Thought cannot be superadded to matter, so as, in any sense, to render it true, that matter can become cogitative.*

If thought be superadded to matter, the thought must be first created, and exist separately, and independently of the matter. Should it be said, *that the creation of an attribute, without any subject, or being, in which it inheres, is an absurdity:* I readily grant it; but it is an absurdity, of which the persons whom I oppose, are the authors. They must, therefore, charge it to themselves, and not to me. But the thought, or consciousness existing by itself, and independently, *before it is annexed to the matter*, must exist also in the same independent manner *afterwards*. It may be *annexed*, or *joined, to the matter;* but it cannot be *inherent in it*. The thought may exist within, or without, the matter, as an appendage; but it is not, and cannot be, *a property*, or *attribute, of the matter*. The matter was perfect in all its essential properties, antecedently to the annexation of thought; and thought was not one of those properties. Thought is no more one of the properties of matter, after being annexed to it, than it was before; and, if separated from it again, will leave the matter still perfect, or possessed of all its properties. *Before the thought was annexed to it*, it could not be truly said, that the matter was cogitative: It can be no more truly said *now, after it is annexed:* for the matter itself thinks no more, than before. The supposition, therefore, that thought may be superadded to matter, is a palpable absurdity.

7thly. *This doctrine intends, either that the properties of matter and mind are the same; or that the substratum of mind is the same with the substratum of matter; and, in either intention, is an absurdity.*

That *thought*, *volition*, and *motivity*, the properties of mind, are the same things with *solidity*, *extension*, and *mobility*, the properties of matter, is a proposition, which contradicts intuitive certainty; and is therefore intuitively false. The *substrata*, in both cases, are absolutely unknown, by *us*. But it is a palpable absurdity to say, that an unknown thing in one case, a thing of which we have no conception, is the same with a thing, in another case, equally unknown. I grant, that a proposition concerning things unknown may be true; but it can never be known by us to be true. Ideas, which we have not, we cannot possibly compare; and therefore can never discern whether they agree, or disagree. To form propositions about them, therefore, so long as this is the fact, is ab-

surd and ridiculous. But, if *both these propositions* are absurdities, then the proposition, *that mind is material*, is also an absurdity: for it is formed either of one, or both, of these.

The only mode of legitimate argumentation on the subject, considered in this manner, is the following. Mind and Matter present to us two totally diverse sets of properties. The substratum, in which these properties co-exist, is, in each case, rationally regarded as the cause of this difference. The properties (you will observe, I speak of essential properties only) are commonly, and justly, considered *as a part, and an inseparable part, of the nature, or constitution, of the substratum, in which they are inherent;* not as *merely annexed*, or *arbitrarily adjoined, to the substratum;* but as inseparable from it in such a sense, that the destruction of the properties would be also the destruction of the substratum. Thus if matter should cease to be extended, solid, or moveable, it would cease to be matter. Thus, if minds ceased to be perceiving, conscious, voluntary, and active, they would cease to be minds. This part of their nature, therefore, which we call their properties, is so absolutely dependent on the constitution of the substratum, or that part of their nature which lies beyond our reach, that both necessarily exist, or cease to exist, together. The substratum is, therefore, by its constitution, the necessary and inseparable cause of the properties; that is, *the properties are what they are, because the substratum is what it is*. As, therefore, the effects are totally unlike, it is rationally argued, that the causes are unlike, from the well known and intuitive truth, that unlike effects cannot proceed from the same cause.

3thly. *The existence of the substratum itself cannot be proved.*

This truth is so well known to every metaphysician, and even to every person tolerably acquainted with logic, as customarily taught in schools of science, that it would seem hardly to demand an illustration. Still it may be proper to observe, that as this supposed substratum, if it exist, is a thing, of which we do not, and cannot, form a single idea; we can, of course, neither affirm, nor deny, any thing concerning it, with any possible knowledge, that either the affirmation, or negation, is true. All that we can do is to render one, or the other, in a certain degree probable. Of course, every discussion, and every doctrine, tending to establish the materiality of the soul, is founded originally in uncertainty, and absolutely incapable of proof: for, if it cannot be proved, that such a substratum exists, it plainly cannot be proved, that the soul is such a substratum, connected with its properties.

I have hitherto considered this doctrine, as it is presented to us by reason. I shall now proceed to examine the account, which is given of it in the Scriptures.

Here I observe,

1st. *That all other thinking beings, of which we have any knowledge, are exhibited in the Scriptures as being Immaterial.*

Beside ourselves, we have no knowledge of any other thinking beings, except GOD *and Angels*. Both these are expressly declared to be *spirits*, in the Scriptures; in a plain and direct distinction from *matter*. That GOD is an immaterial being, will not be questioned. That *Angels* are immaterial, as represented in the Scriptures, is so obvious, that, so far as I know, it never has been questioned. *Dr. Priestly*, the principal modern champion for the materiality of the soul, was so sensible, that this is the Scriptural exhibition of this subject, that he has laboured hard to disprove the existence of any such beings, as Angels; because he saw their existence, as separate spirits, would prove an insurmountable obstacle to the establishment of his scheme; and because he thought it easier to disprove their existence absolutely, than to evince that they were material. In doing the former he had, however, to face a great multitude of express assertions, contained in the Bible, declaring the existence of such beings; and a multitude of historical accounts, affirming, in the same direct manner, their character, stations, and employments; together with their appearance, and agency, often repeated in the affairs of this world. If he thought this the easier task of the two; as he evidently did; it is clear, that the latter, viz. the proof, that Angels are material, was, in his view, a task absolutely hopeless. In truth, every thing, attributed to Angels in the Scriptures, refutes, and destroys, every supposition of their materiality.

But, if God, if Angels, are thinking beings, and at the same time immaterial, the argument from analogy strongly leads us to conclude, that all other thinking beings are immaterial also. Nor is there one valid objection against the immateriality of the human soul, which will not lie, with equal force, against that of Angels, and that of the Creator. It is true, neither of these beings is united to a body; but both God and Angels are possessed of the power of acting upon matter, and controlling it, to a far greater extent than *we*. This being admitted, as it plainly must be, without a question; the only real difficulty, concerning the connexion of soul and body, is removed, and there can remain no solid objection against the immateriality of the soul, derived from this source.

2dly. *The souls of men are in the Scriptures declared to be immaterial.*

The Scriptures exhibit this doctrine *in two ways:*

1st. *In express Assertions;* and,

2dly. *In Facts.*

1st. *In express Assertions.*

In Psalm xxxi. 5, *David* says, *Into thine hand I commit my spirit.* These words were repeated by our Saviour on the cross, immediately before he expired. In the same manner *St. Stephen*, immediately before his death, prayed to CHRIST in these words: *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!* That both these forms of phraseology have a real and important meaning, cannot be disputed; nor that

those, who uttered them, understood what that meaning was, and used them with the most exact propriety: one of them being CHRIST; the other two, *David*, an inspired prophet, and *Stephen*, *a man full of the Holy Ghost*. Let me then ask, What is this meaning? What does the word, Spirit, in these passages, signify? Certainly it does not signify *the body*. It will not be pretended, that this can be the meaning. Much less does it signify that organization of the body, which *Dr. Priestly* considers as being especially the soul. Certainly it does not intend *the breath:* for it cannot be supposed, that either of these persons wished to commend to God the last portion of air, which he breathed. What then does it intend? There is no other alternative, but this; that it intends *the immaterial Soul;* the thinking, conscious being.

This is completely evinced by that remarkable phraseology, with which the *Hebrews* customarily declared the death of a man: *He gave up the ghost*. That this phrase denoted, in the mouths of those who used it, the yielding up of the immaterial spirit into the hands of God, cannot be doubted, unless it be voluntarily doubted. *Should* it be doubted, *Solomon* has determined the point beyond a debate. *Then*, says he, (that is, immediately after death) *shall the dust, or body, return to the earth as it was, and the spirit into the hands of God who gave it*. Here the whole *Hebrew* doctrine is declared on this subject; and the distinction between the soul and the body completely established: for of the one it is asserted, that it *shall return to the earth;* and, of the other, *that it shall return to God*. As the dust, or body, contains all that is material in man; so it is certain, that all this, after death, *returns to the earth*. But it is equally certain, that *the spirit* does not return to the earth, but *unto God;* and is therefore something, totally distinct from the body, or the material part of man. This is, therefore, unquestionably the true meaning of the Hebrew phrase, *Giving up the Ghost;* and of these expressions of our SAVIOUR, *David*, and *Stephen*. This phraseology, it should be remembered, is always used by THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH; and is chosen by him to convey to us just ideas concerning this subject. It is, therefore, really just; and is exactly expressive of that which is true.

In Isaiah xxxi. 3, the prophet says, *For the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit*. Here the distinction between flesh, or body, and spirit, is so plainly, as well as intentionally, marked, that the passage can need no comment.

In Genesis xxv. 8, it is said, *Then Abraham gave up the ghost ——and was gathered to his people*. This by a thoughtless reader may be supposed to mean, that *Abraham was buried with his fathers*. But this is an entire misconception: for the fathers of *Abraham* were buried several hundred miles from him; some in *Chaldea;* and *Terah* in *Haran*, in *Mesopotamia:* whereas *Abraham* was buried in the cave of *Macpelah*, in *Canaan*. The true meaning of the passage is, that *he was gathered to the assembly of the blessed*, and

particularly to those good men, among his ancestors, who were united to that assembly. In this manner the prophets themselves explain it. *Job* says, *The rich man shall lie down, but he shall not be gathered.* CHRIST, in *Isaiah* xlix. 5, says, *Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious, in the eyes of the Lord.* In the same manner is the phrase explained by *Jeremiah* and *Ezekiel.* But the body of *Abraham* was changed to dust, in the cave of *Macpelah:* while something beside that body, that is, the immaterial spirit, was gathered to this divine assembly. Accordingly, Christ announces to his Disciples, that they *shall sit down in the Kingdom of God, with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob;* concerning each of whom it was also said, *that he was gathered unto his people.* Accordingly also, God says to *Moses, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.* Christ alleges these words, as unquestionable proof of the αναστασις, or *future separate existence of spirits;* and subjoins to his proof this unanswerable argument, which the *Sadducees*, the materialists of that day, durst not attempt to dispute; *for God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.* In other words, *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, were living beings, when this declaration was made by God to *Moses.*

Accordingly also, Christ, in the parable of *Dives and Lazarus*, informs us, that *Lazarus was*, after his death, *carried by Angels to Abraham's bosom: Lazarus* being gathered to his people, as *Abraham* was to his; and both being united to the assembly of the blessed.

This parable is itself the most explicit declaration of the doctrine, for which I contend. In it *Dives and Lazarus* are both asserted to have died, and to have entered the future world, as separate spirits, while *the five brethren* of *Dives* were living, and, of course, while their bodies were both masses of putrefaction in this world. No exhibition can be clearer, or more unexceptionable, than this.

It has, however, been objected, that *this is a parabolic representation;* and that, therefore, it is not to be considered as decisive on this point. Nothing could more strongly prove the decisive influence of this parable on the question, in the eye of the objector himself, than his recourse to this pitiful subterfuge. It is acknowledged on all hands, that the truth of a parable does not demand the *reality of the persons*, or *the historical facts*, which it contains. But, that the *doctrines, contained in it*, are equally true with those of the literal texts, must be admitted by every man, who does not choose to say, that Christ in his parables is a teacher of falsehood. The doctrine, therefore, that spirits exist in a separate state, is as certainly declared here, as it can be by words.

To *the thief*, just ready to expire on the cross, our Saviour said, *To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.* The body of the thief was that day either on the cross, or in the grave. Of course his soul, or spirit, was that, which went to Paradise with the Redeemer.

The objectors to this doctrine have attempted to escape from the irresistible force of this text by two comments, still more pitiful than the subterfuge above mentioned. The first is, that the word, *To-day*, refers to the time of our Saviour's speaking, and not to the time when the thief was to be with him in Paradise. On this I shall only ask my opponent, Whether he really believes, that our Saviour said thus: *I speak to thee to-day, and not yesterday, nor to-morrow?* The other explanation is, that, as in the eternity of God *one day is the same thing as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day, Christ* meant by the word, *to-day*, the same thing with that eternity. On this comment I shall only ask, Whether the dying Saviour spoke to the dying man language, which he intended he should understand, and which he *could* understand; or whether he spoke to him language, which he could not possibly understand, and by which Christ knew he would certainly be deceived?

St. *Paul*, in 2 Corinthians v. 6, says, *Therefore we are always confident, knowing, that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.* In this passage the Apostle declares expressly, that to be *at home in the body*, is to be *absent from the Lord;* and that to be *absent from the body*, is to be *present with the Lord.* But according to the scheme which I am opposing, the body is the whole man; and therefore, if the man is ever to be present with the Lord, his body must be present; and if his body be absent, the man must be absent also; in direct contradiction to the assertion of the Apostle. To be absent from the body is, on this plan, phraseology without meaning; because there is nothing but the body. This passage is, therefore, an explicit declaration that man is something beside body; distinct from it; capable of being separated, or *absent from* it; and, in consequence of this separation, of being *present with the Lord.* This something, also, he elsewhere declares to be conscious, and capable of enjoyment: for he says, that *to be* thus present *with Christ*, is a *far better* state than the present. This something, therefore, thus capable of being absent from the body, is an immaterial spirit: for beside body, or matter, my opponents will agree, that there is nothing, except spirits.

2dly. *The Scriptures give an unanswerable proof, by Facts, that the soul is immaterial.*

1st. *The Revelation of St. John furnishes many specimens of this nature.*

In the fourth chapter of this prophesy he saw *four and twenty elders*, surrounding the throne of the majesty in the Heavens. In the seventh chapter he informs us, that he *beheld a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palms in their hands*, uniting with the Angels, the Elders, and the four Living Ones, in the worship of God, and the

everlasting ascription of praise and glory to his name. Upon this he asked the Angel interpreter, Who these persons were. The Angel informed him, that they were those, *who came out of great tribulation, and who had washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb;* that, *therefore, they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple;* that *they shall neither hunger, nor thirst, nor suffer, any more; but shall be fed by the Lamb* with living bread, and *led unto fountains of living waters.* No ingenuity of interpretation, no skill at evasion, will enable any man to satisfy even himself, if he will take all the parts of these accounts together, that they can mean any thing less, or more, than that these persons were all separate spirits. Elders are *men;* Those, who are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, are men; and can be no other than men. Men, who are around the throne of God, and *before his throne;* who are *brought out of great tribulation;* who *serve him day and night in his temple;* who *hunger, thirst, and suffer, no more;* who *feed on the bread, and drink the water, of life;* and who sustain all these characters, and do all these things, while the world yet remains, and many ages before its termination, are *men in the Heavens.* They are, therefore, the bodies of men, or their separate spirits. I leave my antagonists to choose which side of the alternative they please.

But if a doubt can remain, *St. John* has himself settled it; for in the sixth chapter, and ninth verse, he says, *And when he had opened the fifth seal I saw under the altar the Souls of them, that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held; and white robes were given unto every one of them.* The like phraseology is also used, Revelations xx. 4. Now let me ask, What was it which *John* saw? That they were persons, or intelligent beings, cannot be doubted; that they have been once slain, and are therefore men, is equally certain; that they are *glorified* persons, is also certain; that they are Souls, or separate spirits, is certain; because the Apostle has said so, and the Spirit of God has said so. It is, therefore, true. It is also certain, from the whole account, given by the Scriptures at large, concerning this subject: for we know, *that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.* Should it be said, that *these things passed in vision, and that they were not real exhibitions of facts; the book being a symbolical representation, and not a real account of facts:* I answer, that I have no difficulty in granting it; although I have not a doubt, that every one of the things, which I have mentioned, was strictly a matter of fact. At the same time, the argument stands on the same basis, upon either scheme. If the representation be considered as strictly symbolical; still the doctrines, which it contains, are all exactly true. This is all, for which I contend; and this must be conceded by my opponents, unless they are willing to charge God with having taught falsehood to mankind.

In exact accordance with these observations, *St. Paul* observes,

1 *Thessalonians* iv. 14, *For if we believe, that Jesus died, and rose again; even so them also, who sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him:* that is, when *the Lord shall descend*, as he mentions in the next verse but one, *from Heaven with a shout*, with *the innumerable company of Angels; God shall bring with him* to this world *the spirits of just men made perfect*, and re-unite their bodies to them: and they, and those followers of Christ, who shall *remain alive* at the end of the world, *shall be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air.* A great multitude of these very persons are those glorified Saints, whom *John* saw, when he was admitted to that happy world.

I shall not insist on the facts, specified in the parable of *Dives and Lazarus*, as an example under this head; although I think they might be fairly insisted on as furnishing such an example. Instead of dwelling on this, I shall proceed to another specimen, which is certainly secured, if in the view of prejudice any thing can be secured, from evasion and cavil.

When Christ was transfigured on the Mount; there were present with him *Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory, and talked with him, and spake of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.* The body of *Elias* was changed, when he was conveyed to heaven in a chariot of fire. But the body of *Moses* was buried by the hand of God *in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-Peor;* and will rise, hereafter, with other bodies of the saints, at the general resurrection. Yet *Moses* was actually on this Mount in company with *Elias.* If *Moses* when he thus appeared, was not a separate spirit, I leave it to my antagonists to tell us what he was.

Thus have I summarily considered this subject, as it is presented to us both by Scripture and reason. If the things, which I have said, have the same weight and conclusiveness in the minds of others, which they have in my own, it must be admitted by them as unquestionably evident from both sources of proof, not only that the soul is not material, but that the doctrine of its materiality is sustained by no solid argument whatever. Reason furnishes none: the Scriptures furnish none. I cannot help adding, that, had the doctrine been considered by itself only, and not been thought necessary for the support of some system, it would probably never have been adopted by any man living. I know not, that it was ever adopted by itself, or on account of any evidence which was supposed to attend it, when considered singly, or as unconnected with other doctrines. It seems always to have been taken up, either as subsidiary to the support of other parts of a system, or as necessarily flowing from other doctrines, considered as already established, and as being inconsistent in themselves with the immateriality of the soul. *Dr. Priestly* appears to have adopted this scheme for the former of these reasons; viz. because he thought the materiality of the soul necessary to the support of those parts of his system, which respect the character of the Redeemer. This,

at least, is the fact, if I understand his own language. Atheists have embraced this doctrine, because they were driven to it by the fundamental principles of their system. There is always a rational suspicion concerning the soundness, and evidence, of doctrines taken up on these grounds.

A single observation shall conclude this discourse.

We see, here, one remarkable instance of the agreement of the Scriptures with Common sense.

All nations have united in the opinion, that the human soul is an immaterial being, wholly distinct from the Body. I do not intend, that ignorant nations have formed a system, or a science, on this subject; nor that a savage could correctly define, or explain, his views of it, so as to leave them unobjectionable in the eye of a Philosopher. But I intend, that Immateriality, and distinction from the Body, are essential parts of all his opinions concerning the Soul. When I mention this as the doctrine of all nations, I would be understood to mean, not that there are no exceptions, but that the existing exceptions are, at least so far as hitherto known, few, and insignificant with respect to this question. The Aborigines of this country, for example, believed, that, although they buried the body of a friend, and left it to moulder into dust, *the friend*, *the man*, lived still, and went to a happier world. This man, therefore, was not the body, for that was in the grave; but was an immaterial and separate spirit; *the living*, *thinking thing*, which controlled and actuated that Body.

Exactly the same in substance, and altogether more perfect in manner and degree, is the doctrine of the Scriptures. This harmony between the Scriptures and common sense, was indeed to be presumed: for God is the origin of both. Hence, in all cases, so far as the views of common sense extend, they are exactly accordant with the Scriptures. Philosophy has opposed the Scriptures, often: common sense never. Accordingly *the common people* of the Jewish nation, *gladly heard Christ* in the great body of instances, and his Apostles, after him; in spite of all their prejudices, and the influence of their Rulers; and often awed those Rulers, so as to restrain them from the violence which they intended: On the other hand, the Scribes and Pharisees, and still more, the Sadducees, rejected their doctrines almost absolutely, notwithstanding the confirmation of them by their own Scriptures. In the same manner have the common people in Christian countries generally, when left to themselves, adhered to the genuine scheme of the Gospel: while the numerous heresies, which have disturbed the Church, and misled mankind, have been, almost without an exception, the offspring of Philosophy.

SERMON XXIV.

THE SOUL NOT A CHAIN OF IDEAS AND EXERCISES.

GENESIS ii. 7.—*And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.*

IN my last discourse, I proposed to consider *the nature of the human soul.* Concerning this subject, I remarked, that *there were three entirely different opinions.*

The first of these in the order, in which they were then mentioned, is, *that man is an immaterial substance, an Intelligent, voluntary being; the subject of attributes, the author of actions, and destined to immortality.*

The second is, *that man is a material, thinking, voluntary being; differing in nothing, but his modification and its effects, from other material substances.* Some of those, who hold this scheme, believe him immortal: while others limit his existence to the present world.

The third is, *that man is neither of these, but a mere succession, or chain,* as the abetters of it express themselves, *of ideas and exercises.*

In discussing this subject, I proposed the following plan, viz. *to prove the first of these doctrines, by disproving the two last:* observing, that, as one of the three is unquestionably true, if the two last are false, the first is true of course.

The second, which asserts the soul to be material, I then considered at length. I shall now proceed to the consideration of *the third, which asserts that the soul is a mere succession, or chain, of ideas and exercises.*

Before I commence the direct arguments against this doctrine in form, it will be proper to say something on *the principal reason, alleged against the reception of the first of these schemes;* or that, which I consider as the true one, and made particularly the foundation of the reception of *the third.* This reason, so far as I have been informed of it, (and I have heard it alleged by the ablest philosopher among all those, whom I have known to adopt this scheme, on this side of the *Atlantic*) is the following: *that we can form no conception of any thing in ourselves, beyond our ideas and exercises.* Of these we are conscious and certain; but of a supposed substance, in which these are inherent; a cause, whence they proceed; an agent, who is the author of them; we have no conception. This argument, reduced to a general form, will stand thus: *That nothing exists, of which we have no conception.* For, undoubtedly, if the argument is conclusive, or has weight, when alleged against the existence of man, as an agent, substance, or

cause; it will have the same weight, or conclusiveness, against the existence of every other agent, cause, or substance; and, in a word, against the existence of every thing, of which we cannot form a conception.

Let us now, briefly consider the length, to which we shall necessarily be carried by the adoption of this supposed principle.

Of God, the original Existence, from whom all things else are derived, it is said in the Scriptures; and Reason subjoins her fullest attestation to what is said: *Canst thou, by searching, find out God; canst thou find out the Almighty, unto perfection? It*, that is, this subject, *is high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.* Concerning the Omnipresence and Omniscience of this great Being, *David* exclaims, *Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, it is high, I cannot attain unto it.* According to the abovementioned principle, *all that, which we cannot understand concerning God, has no existence, and must stand for nothing.* But how little do we understand concerning God; particularly, of the nature of that exalted Being; his influence as a cause; and his mode of operating. To apply the argument to the case in hand; it is, undoubtedly, at least as difficult to conceive of an *Infinite agent*, as a *finite one.* If, then, we are to deny the existence of a *finite agent*, because we can form no conception of the substance of such a being; or the modes, in which he operates; or the power, which he possesses of producing effects; then we must also deny the existence of an *Infinite agent*, for exactly the same reason; since it is perfectly plain, that we can no more form any conception of these things in *Him.*

Nor shall we have any happier success in our inquiries concerning *Attributes and Operations.* God styles himself *merciful, gracious, true, faithful, and just;* and we uniformly attribute to him, *mercy, grace, wisdom, truth, faithfulness, and justice.* These names are supposed to stand for certain things, which they indicate; things, which in fact exist. In the same manner, also, they are considered by God himself; as is evident from this plain reason; that he adopts them to express *his* views to mankind, as *they* adopt them to express *theirs* to each other; and does not indicate, what, if the case were otherwise, veracity plainly demands; that he uses them in a manner, diverse from that, in which they are used by men. What, then, is the meaning of these words? What, for example, *is Truth* in God? There are but *two answers*, which can be given to this question. One is, that *he has invariably spoken truth;* and the other, that *there is in him a cause, disposition, or propensity, which induces, or inclines him to speak truth.* It hardly needs to be observed, that the former of these is very rarely intended, when we speak of *the Veracity of God;* and the latter, almost always. As this cannot but be admitted by every man; so it is expressly declared in many parts of the Scriptures. *St. Paul,*

speaking concerning the oath of God to *Abraham*, says, that *it was impossible for God to lie*. Now it is perfectly evident, that the mere fact, that God has invariably spoken truth heretofore, infers not in any degree an impossibility, that he should lie hereafter. All, which can be said concerning this fact, is, that it gives us satisfactory reason to conclude, that *he will not*. The impossibility of his speaking falsehood is supposed by us to exist, where it must necessarily exist, if at all, in *the cause, which induces him to speak truth;* that is, in *the moral attribute of his nature, commonly called Truth*, or *Veracity*. If there be nothing in his nature, which, as a cause, influences him to speak truth; then his speaking truth heretofore has been, and his speaking truth hereafter, if he should in fact speak it, will be, a mere contingency. If, then, *it is impossible for God to lie;* it is so, for this reason only; that there is in his nature *a cause, which invariably produces truth in him, as its proper and uniform effect;* viz. the moral attribute of Truth, or Veracity.

But of this cause, what conception are we able to form? Plainly, none at all. Its effects are all, that we know; and from these only, or from its connexion with other moral attributes, do we argue even its existence. Shall we, then, deny this attribute to God; and say, that all which *we* mean, and all which *he* means, when he is called a God of truth, is, that he has invariably spoken truth hitherto? There was a period in duration, when he had not spoken at all; because there was no being, beside himself, and therefore none, to whom he could speak. But will any man say, he was not then, as truly and entirely as at any period afterwards, a God of truth?

Nor shall we be materially more successful in our inquiries concerning *Operations*, than concerning *attributes and agents*. Christ declares, that every man, who *sees the kingdom of God, must be born again of the Spirit of God*. But what conception are we able to form of *Regeneration*, beyond the mere fact? Christ himself teaches us *in his allusion to the wind*, in the same discourse, that we are unconscious, alike, of the manner in which, and the Agent by whom, it is produced. Shall we then deny the fact, that man is thus regenerated? What is true of the attribute of truth, thus considered, and of the operation, by which the new birth is thus formed in man, is equally true of other attributes, and other operations. Universally, substance, causation, and the *modus operandi*, lie wholly beyond our reach. But shall we on this account deny the facts; or assert, that there are no causes to produce them? In the former case, we shall annihilate the universe at once; and, in the latter, pronounce every fact to be a mere contingency.

Thus it appears, that the general argument, on which the scheme concerning the human soul, opposed in this discourse, is founded, does not contribute, even in the remotest manner, to support it. It appears also, that according to this argument, the very fundamental

principles of all science must be given up, as a collection of palpable absurdities.

Having premised these things, I shall now proceed to offer some direct arguments against this scheme.

1st. *It is directly contrary to the natural conceptions of mankind, and is therefore false.*

Every man living, naturally and originally conceives, that he himself is a being; a substance; an agent; immediately the subject of his own thoughts; and the cause, and author, of his volitions and actions. By his preceding thoughts, volitions, and actions, he feels conscious to himself, that he influences, in a great variety of ways, those which succeed; and that by his past and present conduct he so influences his future conduct, that it would never be what it is, but for such influence. At the same time, he is equally conscious, that he was the subject of past thoughts, and the author of past conduct, during a period, which he denominates *his life*. This he considers himself as knowing, by means of the evidence termed remembrance; and regards himself, as having had from the utmost limit of that period, a continued being. This he witnesses, every day, by saying, "I was the subject of such and such thoughts, and the author of such and such conduct and designs, at such and such times:" denoting, that *the something*, which he calls *I*, and which he considers as *a living, acting, existence*, was in being at these several times; and has had a continued being, to the present time. He does not say, "*Such an idea existed at such a time; such a volition; such an exercise, or action:*" but that "*I*," a certain something, totally distinct from the idea, or the exercise, "*was the subject of that idea, or exercise, the author of it; the agent, by whom it was performed, or brought to pass.*" Whether this be not the only course of thinking, adopted by us with respect to this subject, I appeal to every member of this assembly to decide: for he will find the proof complete in his own mind. This mode of thinking is so natural and necessary to man, that no other mode can, without great labour and pains-taking, be pursued, for any length of time, by any man; if, indeed, it can be thus pursued at all.

But *the mode of thinking, natural to man, was constituted by God himself*, and inwrought in our very nature. If, then, this mode is erroneous; God has produced the error by his own creative act; and is himself the author of a standing, universal delusion, of which man is the subject alway; not by any bias of inclination, but by the original constitution of his nature. Is such conduct reconcilable with the divine character; with that perfect sincerity, with that infinite love of truth, which on the best grounds we attribute to our Maker? If by his own voluntary act he deludes us in this instance, and necessitates us to be deluded; is it not rationally to be supposed, that he may delude us in any and every other?

Further; *The real works of God*, whatever they are, *are un-*

doubtedly the best and most perfect displays of his character. When, therefore, Intelligent creatures conceive of his works, as they really are; they conceive of *Him*, the author of them, in the manner most honourable to himself, and most agreeable to his pleasure. For such conceptions, then, he undoubtedly formed them. Accordingly, if they exercise their faculty of understanding, and employ their powers of conceiving, in the manner in which they were constituted, faithfully, and without negligence; their conceptions, it ought to be presumed, will be right, and true, so far as they extend. Their conceptions may be very few; but they will not be necessarily erroneous. They may mistake, as they must be ignorant, with regard to things beyond the limits of their capacity. But their original mode of conceiving, cannot be supposed to lead them of course to misconception. If the contrary be true; then God has, by the constitution of their minds, led them necessarily to misconceive of his works; and to regard him as having made, not the things which he has really made, but totally other things; and necessarily to conceive of him in a totally other light, than that in which he would be exhibited by the real works of his hands. In this case, they are prevented from knowing his real character by his works; the only medium, through which it can be known at all; and are led to form a false character of him, from that constitution, which he has given to their minds.

This argument is not a little illustrated by *the nature of Language.*

Language was originally given to mankind by God, as the medium of communicating their thoughts to each other. It is, therefore, unquestionably a just and true medium of communication. This is further proved by the fact, that he has himself used it to communicate his own thoughts to mankind; and used it in exactly the same manner, in which it is customarily used by them. But all languages are formed on the scheme of the existence, and agency, of real beings, called men. Such beings, particularly, are denoted in all languages by the personal pronouns. Each of these expresses a being, an agent, who thinks, and acts; and who is uniformly spoken of as a thinking, acting being; the subject of qualities and powers, and the author of consequent actions. Every man uses language in this manner. In the same manner, God uses the language of men; and not only speaks of *himself*, as an existing, living agent, thinking and acting in such and such manners; but of men also, as existing, thinking, and acting, as really as himself. To this scheme every part of language is so conformed, that no man can possibly discourse, even for a few minutes, in such a manner, as to conform his language to the scheme, which I am opposing. The very abettors of it are obliged, in spite of their philosophy, to speak in the same manner with that of other men; and must form a new language, if they would discourse in a manner accordant with their philosophy.

That language is truly expressive of the manner, in which men really think, cannot be questioned. Men, therefore, unquestionably think, and ever have thought, in the manner, thus clearly exhibited by the very nature of their language. As this language was originally communicated, and has since been extensively used, by God himself; it is rationally concluded, that the thoughts which it expresses are just and true.

2dly. *Attributes cannot be conceived to exist independently of substances, or of something in which they inhere.*

No man conceives, that *extension, solidity, and mobility, make up what he calls matter;* but all men regard matter, as being *an extended, solid, moveable something;* which something, is entirely distinct from these attributes; and is the subject, in which they are inherent. By the abettors of this scheme it is thought to be an objection against the existence of substance, *that we cannot conceive of its nature.* Let them try, whether they can form a conception of an idea, possessing an independent existence; of consciousness, without a being to be conscious; of an exercise, without any thing exercised, or without a subject of that exercise. If they can form distinct conceptions, of this kind, they must undoubtedly be pronounced to possess minds of a very peculiar structure.

3dly. *This scheme destroys personal Identity.*

An idea is *a mere event;* having a momentary existence, and then perishing for ever. Should another idea afterwards exist, exactly resembling it in every thing, but the period in which it exists, it would not, and could not, be the same; but would differ from it, in consequence of being separated from it by time, just as if the two ideas were to co-exist, and were separated from each other by place, and number. As we could not say, in the latter case, that the two ideas were but one, or the same; so we could no more truly say this, in the former case. An example will make this subject perfectly familiar. Two equal parts of space, separated from each other by intervening space, are numerically different, and cannot be said, with even the appearance of truth, to be the same; but are intuitively discerned to be distinct from each other. In the same manner, two equal parts of duration, separated by intervening duration, are intuitively discerned not to be the same; but are perfectly distinct from each other. The hour between eleven and twelve, which existed yesterday, cannot re-exist to-day, or hereafter; but has perished for ever; and cannot be recalled even by God himself, since its re-existence would involve a contradiction. In the same manner it involves a contradiction to suppose, that an idea, which existed yesterday, should re-exist to-day. On this plan, therefore, the soul of man has no continued existence, except for an indivisible moment; and is not the same thing, which it was the preceding hour, day, or year; but has varied, and become an absolutely new soul, through every moment, which has passed since it was created; and will continue to be a new thing, every moment throughout eternity.

Should it be alleged, that *personal Identity consists in Consciousness;* that *present or future ideas may be attended with a Consciousness of the existence of those which are past;* and that thus Identity may be preserved: I answer, that Bishop *Berkeley* has demonstrated, and any man of reflection may easily perceive the demonstration, that personal Identity does not, and cannot, consist in consciousness. Consciousness, instead of *being personal identity, is only the evidence of it;* as may be easily and unanswerably proved. But no evidence can exist of *that which is not.* As in the case supposed, therefore, there is no such identity in fact; no evidence of it can exist.

4thly. *According to this scheme, it follows, that there is nothing, which can be punished, or rewarded by God.*

According to the Scriptures, God will reward, and punish, that, and that only, which is the subject of guilt; and, according both to the Scriptures and Common Sense, this is the only equitable mode of administration. But the guilt, or the virtue, if either be imputable to a mere idea, or exercise, is imputable only to those ideas, and exercises, which existed at the time, when the guilt, or the virtue, existed. But these, even if we should allow them to be capable of punishment, or reward, have all perished before the day of trial, and can never exist again. That part of the chain of ideas and exercises, which will exist at the judgment, will have begun to exist after the day of probation is ended; and cannot be chargeable with guilt, which existed before themselves existed. *These very ideas, also,* will perish before the punishment will be begun; and will not be the ideas actually punished. Other ideas, not even then in existence, but which will have begun to exist after the trial, and after the sentence, will be the things, by which the punishment will be experienced. Thus the whole of what is intended by *trial, reward, and punishment,* according to this system, amounts to this: that there are many chains of ideas and exercises, successively existing, partly during a period, called a state of probation, and partly during another period, called a state of reward. In one case, the *beginning* of a chain is formed of virtuous ideas and exercises; and *the end,* of happy ones: in another, *the beginning* is formed of sinful ideas and exercises; and *the end,* of miserable ones. I presume this will be admitted to be a strange conception of the Creation and Providence of God.

5thly. *According to this scheme, neither guilt, nor virtue, can exist.*

In all the views, which have been formed by the human mind concerning vice and virtue, or (if this is saying too much) in those which have been formed by common sense, it has been universally deemed indispensable to the existence of either, *that a natural ability to choose either to obey, or disobey, the law of God, should precede, or accompany, the virtue, or the vice; and that the obedience, or disobedience, should not be, in the natural sense, necessary.*

Accordingly, a finite agent has been supposed to exist, possessed of understanding to perceive, and ability to choose, that which was good, or evil; that which was conformed, or not conformed, to the law, under which he was placed. Whenever he was unpossessed of such an ability; it has been rather supposed, that he was incapable of either virtue or vice. According to this view of common sense, the scheme of the Scriptures seems every where to be formed. But according to the scheme, which I am opposing, each idea and exercise in the chain, is produced by an immediate creative act of God, and must, *by natural necessity*, be what it is. How, let me ask, can it, in the *natural sense* of possibility, be otherwise than it is? In the first place, an idea or exercise, itself an attribute, can never be the subject of the attribute of power; and can, therefore, do nothing towards rendering itself any thing beside what it is. Secondly, it is not in existence, to prevent itself from being what it is, until it actually becomes possessed of its proper character; and, therefore, could not on this account have prevented the existence of this character. And thirdly, it is made what it is by *Omnipotence*, which nothing can resist, or oppose; and, therefore, is what it is by the most perfect natural necessity. In what manner an idea, or exercise, thus created, can be guilty for having an existence, and character, which it has no natural power to avoid, and for being what it is by a direct act of creation, I confess myself wholly unable to comprehend. It ought here to be remembered, that all preceding volitions, and ideas, have perished, antecedently to the present volition or idea; and, therefore, if we concede, that they were capable of influence, while they existed, they could have no influence on that which is present, because it had not begun to exist until after they had perished. Each idea and exercise is, on the contrary, created what it is, independently of all which precede it.

6thly. *This scheme annihilates the influence of Motives.*

Motives in their nature are addressed to beings, supposed to be capable of being moved, or influenced, by them. But according to this scheme, each idea and exercise is immediately created, what it is; and derives its nature and character, not from any preceding motive, but from Omnipotence. Motives can be addressed only to things, existing at the time when they are addressed. But the idea or exercise, which exists at that time, instantly perishes; and can have no possible influence on the nature, or character, of the new one which succeeds it. *This*, therefore, which the motive is intended to affect, is removed by the nature of the case, beyond the possibility of being affected by it. Still, God addresses motives in his word to mankind; commends them for being influenced by them, and blames them for not being thus influenced. How can this be consistent with the justice of God, when he has himself made it absolutely impossible, that any such influence should exist? Besides, if the influence of a motive really affected the preceding idea, and

in the nature of things it were possible, that the influence should extend to the succeeding one; yet, since he creates the succeeding one such as it is, it is plain, that on this account, also, no such influence can affect it, unless in direct opposition to an act of Omnipotence. Motives, therefore, can have no possible influence on man, according to this scheme; and yet God proposes them to man, and blames, and punishes him for not being influenced by them. Can this be supposed of the Creator?

7thly. *Mankind receive impressions from each other, both of thought and volition, or of idea and exercise: but ideas and exercises can never communicate a consciousness of their existence to any thing.*

To communicate is an act; and is the result of power. But ideas and exercises, which are themselves mere acts, cannot be the subjects of powers, and become themselves active. That other men communicate to us many thoughts and volitions, is too certain to admit either of doubt, or illustration. The communication certainly exists, and exists continually. Either, then, the Idea, which for the time being is the Soul, the Man, communicates the apprehension of itself to another Idea, which for the time being is another Soul: or God by a direct act of his power conveys this apprehension. That an Idea, a thing, merely passive, should act in this manner, or any manner, is plainly impossible. That God should convey to us an apprehension of an Idea, and so convey it as to give us irresistible conviction that it is conveyed to us, always, by a finite agent, is, so far as I can perceive, the same thing as merely, and uniformly, to *delude* us. Certainly this cannot be attributed to God. Yet, as every such communication is unquestionably an act, it certainly is performed by an agent. An Idea; a mere attribute; is intuitively not an agent, but an effect of agency. God is an agent; but he cannot delude his creatures.

Further, a great multitude of these communications are fraught with moral turpitude; are lies, slanders, sophisms; are full of malignity, and blasphemy; are direct, and designed, temptations to sin. Can these be the immediate acts of JEHOVAH? Is it possible, that, where such is the act, *He* should be the agent? Can we attribute this conduct to our Creator, and feel ourselves to be guiltless? I will leave it, therefore, to my antagonists, to explain how ideas and exercises can communicate Knowledge of themselves, to other ideas and exercises; or how this communication can be charged to God.

8thly. *According to this scheme, the Scriptural doctrine of the perseverance of saints is false.*

According to this scheme, many links in the chain of ideas and exercises are, as they plainly must be acknowledged to be, acts of mere disobedience; and are therefore absolutely, and only sinful: while others in the same chain, are considered as acts of mere obedience; and are therefore absolutely, and only, virtuous or holy.

In this manner, then, such men, as we call good men, or Christians, are alternately perfectly holy, and perfectly sinful. *St. John*, in his first epistle, fifth chapter, and eighteenth verse, says, *We know, that whosoever is born of God, sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God, keepeth himself; and that wicked one toucheth him not.* As this is said by the Spirit of God, it is true. But in what sense is it true? Certainly not in the absolute sense, *that he who is born of God, does not commit any sin:* for the same apostle says, chapter i. 8, *If we say, that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves; and the truth is not in us.* In this sense only, then, is it true, viz. *that he, who is born of God, does not become absolutely a sinner.* Yet in the case supposed, every such person becomes absolutely a sinner. For many such ideas and exercises in the long chain, which extends through life, are absolutely sinful, during their existence; and each of these, during its continuance, is the *Man*, for the time being. For according to this scheme, there is, during each such period, nothing else existing.

Thus, if the scheme be true, man in his best estate falls from grace, and rises to it again, alternately; becomes absolutely a saint, and absolutely a sinner; is perfectly an object of the divine abhorrence, and the divine complacency, by turns; in thousands and millions of instances. How this doctrine is to be reconciled with the declarations of the Scriptures on this subject, I shall leave to the abettors of the scheme to determine.

9thly. *This scheme contradicts intuitive certainty.*

So far as I know, it is agreed by all philosophers, and, if the subject were fairly proposed, would be by every man, that we are all intuitively certain of our own existence. But I am not more certain, *that I exist*, than *that I act;* that I perceive, think, speak, reason, choose, and carry my choice into execution. I am as intuitively certain, that a something, denoted by the word *I* or *myself;* is a cause of certain effects; an agent, performing certain actions; as I am of any possible proposition. These effects, I also intuitively know, would not exist, were there not such an agent, or cause. My actions are intuitively seen by me not to be effects of an extraneous cause, or of something beside myself. It is metaphysically true, and is seen by me with the highest possible certainty to be true, that the thoughts and volitions, which I call mine, are really mine; and are brought into existence by an active power, which I intuitively perceive myself continually to exercise. They are not the thoughts, or volitions, of another; but are certainly discerned by me to be mine alone.

Whether this account of the subject be not exactly just, I appeal to every individual, to determine for himself. The propriety of this appeal will be evident from the consideration, that there is no other possible mode of presenting this subject to the view of mankind: since, whatever any man can know concerning it, he can know only by recurring to what passes within himself. As *the*

heart of man answers to the heart of man, just *as the face answereth to the face in the water;* I am warranted to conclude, that every other man, with respect to this subject, experiences just such views, as I experience; and possesses the same evidence, which I possess.

But if this evidence does not assure me, that I exist as an agent, an active cause, originally and spontaneously operating, it will, I think, be impossible for me to be assured, that there is any such agent. The highest evidence of causation, or efficiency; of the necessity of a cause to the existence of an effect, of the production of beings, and changes in being, as effects, and therefore of the necessity of an Original cause, to account for the existence and government of all things, is found by me in the consciousness of my own agency. The certainty, perceived by mere mental inspection, that the changes passing in my own mind are produced by my own active power, is a higher certainty, than that, with which I perceive any other changes to be accomplished by any other active power. All other certainty of the production of such changes is presented by sensitive experience, or derived from reasoning, founded on this experience. But it is clear, that sensitive experience furnishes evidence, of a kind always less certain and indubitable, than that, which is seen by mental inspection. If, then, we cannot rely on the fact, that we are such agents, when it is exhibited with the certainty of mental inspection; we shall be much less warranted to rely on the fact, that there are any other such agents; because it must always be supported by evidence, in its own nature inferior, and in a less degree requiring, or warranting, our assent. The admission, therefore, of this scheme will directly, and fundamentally, weaken, if not destroy, the evidence, by which we prove the being of God.

Besides, if *we* are not agents, or active causes, possessing active powers, by which we can originate certain changes in the state of things, but are mere chains of ideas and exercises, it will be difficult to assign a reason, why God is not, also, a mere chain of ideas and exercises. Every argument against the existence of *man*, as a substance, and agent, must, I think, lie with the same force against the fact, that God is a substance, and an agent. On the one hand, there is at least as little difficulty in supposing, that an Omnipotent agent may create a finite one, as that such an agent can be self-existent; and, on the other, that God can create finite agents and substances, as that he can create chains of ideas and exercises; mere attributes, existing separately, and independently of any subject.

The Scriptures every where exhibit man as an agent, such as I have described. *St. Paul*, speaking of himself, and his fellow-apostles, says, 2 Corinthians vi. 1, *We then, as workers together with God, beseech you also, that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.* And again, 1 Corinthians iv. 15, *For though ye have ten thousand*

instructers in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus have I begotten you through the Gospel. In the first of these passages, the Apostle directly asserts, *that he and his companions are workers together with God* in the great business of promoting the salvation of men: In the second, *that he has been an agent, or active instrument*, that is, *he has been active, in conjunction with the Spirit of God, in producing the regeneration of the Corinthians.* As he spoke this by the inspiration of that Spirit, it cannot but be true; and true in that sense, in which it naturally strikes the minds of the great body of mankind; because it was written chiefly for them; and because they could understand the words to mean nothing else.

These specimens may serve as examples of thousands more, in which the same thing is declared, in substance, throughout the Scriptures. I know not, that there is any particular advantage in selecting these rather than any others. Every page of the Bible, almost, will furnish many, as expressive of the same thing, as those which I have selected. But these are sufficient; and, if these will not be admitted, I presume no others will be. If the Apostles *were workers together with God;* then they were not merely passive. If *St. Paul* really *begat the Corinthian Christians*, in the spiritual sense; then he was not merely passive. He was not merely an effect; but, while he was formed by Creative power, and was in this sense an effect of that power; he was also formed an agent, a cause, possessed in its own nature of active power, capable of spontaneous exertion; of volitions which were its own; and of motivity, by which it could commence motions and actions in itself, and changes of many kinds in other beings.

I have thus considered this subject at length, in the manner in which it has appeared to my own view; and, if I mistake not, have shown, that the scheme, which I have opposed, is erroneous in itself, and is followed by consequences plainly and eminently absurd. Each member of my audience must now be left to decide for himself, whether the doctrine, contended against, be true or false, Scriptural or anti-scriptural; whether the soul of Man be a chain of ideas and exercises; each created for the moment, and then perishing for ever; a concatenation of mere events, in their nature fleeting and vanishing, and incapable of any permanent existence, even for an hour; or whether it is a spirit; a substance; a permanent being; the subject of a continued existence; an agent, possessed of active powers; capable of voluntarily originating important designs, and carrying them into execution; and thus becoming *a worker together with God* in the interesting purposes of his eternal kingdom. According to the latter of these schemes, the soul of man is one; created at one time; and continuing the same, as to its substance and nature, throughout eternity: according to the other, the soul, for the time being, is the idea, or exercise, existing at that time; commencing its existence with the existence of the idea, and perishing with it. Of course, instead of

one soul, there are in each chain as many, as there are ideas and exercises in that chain: that is, millions literally innumerable. If this scheme can be seriously adopted, rationally understood, and satisfactorily realized, by any man; it must be done in a manner, which I confess myself unable to comprehend, and by a mind, possessed of views and reasonings, to which I can make no pretension.

SERMON XXV.

THE CHIEF END OF MAN.

1 Cor. x. 31.—*Whether, therefore, ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*

IN the three last discourses, I have considered *the Creation, and Nature of Man.* The next subject, naturally offered to our view by a system of Theology, is *The End, for which man was made.* By this I mean *the principal purpose, which he is fitted to answer; the thing, which God had principally in view in bringing Man into existence.*

The importance of this subject can need very little illustration. The question, *For what end was I made;* or *what end are my existence and faculties designed to answer;* is instinctively realized by every sober man to import all, that is of any real moment to himself.

In the text, we are required *to do whatsoever we do to the glory of God.* This precept I consider as disclosing to us the true end, for which we were made. In examining it, I shall attempt to show,

I. *What it is to glorify God:*

II. *That this is constituted by Him the chief end of man:* and,

III. *The Propriety of this divine constitution.*

I. *I shall attempt to show what it is to glorify God.*

In the Scriptures, mankind are frequently required to glorify their Creator. But it is perfectly plain, that *they cannot, in any manner, or degree, change his nature, or the state of his perfections:* these being absolutely *without variableness, or shadow of turning.* It may, I think, be said, not only with truth, but with the highest reverence, that God himself cannot alter his perfections. Indeed this is directly declared in the text, which I have partially quoted. Yet it will not be denied, *that God can glorify himself;* that is, *make himself glorious, by acting in such a manner, as is approved by his own infinite wisdom, and as will display the glory of his character to the view of his Intelligent creatures.* In a manner, generally resembling this, those creatures, and among them mankind, can also glorify him: that is, they can act in such a manner, as to show his glory to each other, and in this way to please him, and gain his approbation.

To glorify God, in this sense, is,

1st. *To know him.*

The perfections of God are the glory of his character. In order

that these may be disclosed by one Intelligent creature to another, it is plainly necessary, that he should first know them, or understand what they are: this knowledge being the basis, on which all other regard to them must be founded. Without this knowledge, mankind might indeed glorify God, as he is glorified by the *mute, passive, incogitative works of his hands;* such as earth, plants, and trees; that is, by being displays of his power and skill to conscious beings; but they cannot in this manner glorify him, *as Intelligent beings.*

It is to be observed, that *knowing God, so as to glorify him*, denotes, that *we have just conceptions of his character, and not those which are false and imaginary.* All the imaginary views, which we form of God, are views, not of the real God, but of a God fashioned by our own minds. In every erroneous conception, which we form of the Creator, we may be said, with a small alteration of the language of Scripture, *to change the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made by corruptible man;* and an image, also, usually *made like unto him;* always debasing the character of JEHOVAH, and robbing it of its real and infinite perfection.

The knowledge of God is gained wholly, either from his Works, or from his Word. To himself only is he known in the abstract. In creation and providence, however, and especially in the Bible, his intelligent creatures can *behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord.* This knowledge we acquire just so far, as we understand the true nature of his works, and the true meaning of his word; and no farther. Erroneous schemes of Philosophy, and false systems of Divinity, contain and convey, so far as they are erroneous, no knowledge of God at all; and can never, by themselves, be the means of glorifying him. Therefore they can never become of any real value to us. As this knowledge can be gained only by study; so, if we love to glorify God, we shall devote ourselves, as much as may be, to the study both of his works and of his word.

2dly. *To think of him in a manner, suited to his character.*

The perfections of God are immensely great, glorious, and wonderful; and justly claim, to be thought of by us in a manner, corresponding with their exalted nature. They claim, particularly, to be thought of by us frequently, daily many times a day, and in a sense alway. Nothing else deserves in any measure so great a share of our thoughts: nothing else, therefore, should in any measure engross them to so great a degree. God is infinitely greater, wiser, and better, than his creatures; and justly demands, that we should devote ourselves to *him*, in a preference to *them*, which is proportioned to his character. It is one charge against the wicked, and one part of their wickedness, that *God is not in all their thoughts.* It is one attribute of good beings, who voluntarily glorify him, that God *is* in all their thoughts. If we would belong to the number of such beings; he must be in all our thoughts; that is, we must think of him, in a sense, unceasingly.

To this end it is necessary, that we think of him willingly, or with pleasure; that we find him in all his works, both of Creation and Providence; that we regard him as the original and universal Agent; as present, acting, and visible, in every thing, which is great, or good; as particularly visible in the things, with which we are conversant in our own personal afflictions, and blessings, in those of our friends, and in those of our country; in his dispensations to his church, and in his government of the world. As these things are chiefly explained to us in the Scriptures; so we should especially think of God, as his character is there unfolded; and labour peculiarly to find him there.

To the same end it is still more necessary, that we think of him justly: that is, that our thoughts of him be noble and exalted; suited, so far as our capacities will allow, to the great and wonderful character, which he has discovered of himself in his works, and in his word.

3dly. *To love him.*

God is infinitely the greatest and most excellent of all beings. In order to glorify him, it is necessary, that we not only discern, but also relish, this character; that we wish well to the furtherance and completion of his designs, and rejoice in the perfect happiness, which he enjoys in the contemplation of his own excellence and the accomplishment of his pleasure, with *supreme benevolence* to him; that we delight in the beauty, loveliness, and glory, of his character, with *supreme complacency;* and that we feel the benefits, bestowed on us and ours, with *supreme gratitude.* Love, in the general sense, is the sum and substance of all the exercises of piety; of reverence, submission, dependence, resignation, confidence, hope, and joy. When, therefore, it is here said, that it is necessary to love God, in order to glorify him; it is intended, that, to this end, we must become the subjects of all these exercises. Nor is this all, which is necessary. We must also become the subjects of them habitually, and unceasingly; and, the more we know of his character, the more we must delight in it; and thus render to him a continually increasing tribute of piety. All this, and this only, is glorifying God with the heart; the most exalted and noble of our moral faculties; for this is that conduct of the heart, which is suited to the nature of the object beloved.

4thly. *To serve him.*

God is *originally* obeyed in the correspondence of the heart with his precepts; and is never *in the proper sense* obeyed, except in those cases, where such a correspondence exists. But to serve him, in the full sense, denotes also, the conformity of our external conduct to his most holy will. Accordingly, he has prescribed to us, not only the general spirit of obedience which is seated in the heart, but also the various modes, in which this spirit operates usefully towards Him, our fellow creatures, and ourselves. Towards him immediately, it operates usefully, and amiably, in the several

acts of worship, public and private, enjoined in the Scriptures; towards our fellow creatures, in the several duties of patriotism, kindness, truth, forgiveness, and charity; and towards ourselves in the duties of diligence, meekness, humility, temperance, and general self-denial. In these things, at large, we are especially employed as active beings; and glorify God, both by conforming our conduct to his character and pleasure, and by exhibiting this conformity to the view of our fellow men.

5thly. *To enjoy him.*

To enjoy God, is *to take pleasure in his character.* This character is one, unchangeable, and perfect; yet it is formed of perfection endlessly diversified. On the one hand, it is infinitely great; on the other, it is infinitely beautiful. It involves, also, all the varieties of greatness and beauty. Innumerable displays and diversities of both greatness and beauty, are made to us in those parts of Creation and Providence, with which we are acquainted; of greatness and beauty both natural and moral, of matter and of mind. All these are merely diversified images of beauty and greatness, originally existing in the divine Mind; feeble reflections of the beams of the Sun of Righteousness. Moral greatness and moral beauty are especially that, which is called *the image of God* in the Scriptures; that, in which man was originally created; that, to which he is restored by the truth of the Gospel, and the Spirit of Grace; that, in which God himself especially delights; and that, which, therefore, ought to be especially relished by *us.* The greatness of God is properly the object of reverence and admiration: the beauty of his character is properly the object of love: names, which in different modes are expressive only of pleasure, or delight, existing in different forms. This delight is spontaneously experienced by all Intelligent beings, who are disposed to glorify their Maker. All these find their happiness ultimately in *him;* and, whether that happiness is gained from the contemplation of his character, or found in his works and dispensations; whether it springs up in peace and self-approbation, or in the reciprocated benevolence of our fellow-creatures; whether it is furnished by present enjoyment, or is anticipated in the delightful foretaste of hope; it is all finally referred to him alone, as its sole Author. By every such mind he is regarded as *the fountain of living waters*, whence flows every stream of pleasure to the unnumbered creatures, which he has made.

I have considered the enjoyment of God, as one of the means of glorifying him, under a distinct head, because it is usually considered as a separate exercise of the mind; and not because I do not suppose it to be in a great measure included under the former heads. Our enjoyment is really and chiefly found in the exercises already specified; and, whenever we are the subjects of those exercises, we are also the subjects of corresponding enjoyment.

Even in this world, such enjoyment is experienced, in no small

degree, by good men. In the future world, it will fill the minds of all glorified beings. There they will *behold* their Maker *face to face*, and *know*, in some measure, *as they also are known*. Here *they taste, and see, that the Lord is good; here they rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of their salvation.* There they will find *fulness of joy, and pleasures for ever more;* and there, *God will be all in all.*

That in all these ways God is glorified, hardly needs illustration. When we study to know God, we show, that he is, in our view, deserving of being thus studied and known. When we entertain high and noble thoughts of his character, we declare, in the most direct manner, that his perfections are sufficiently great and glorious to claim such thoughts of us. When we love him, we show, in the most decisive manner, that he is lovely. When we serve him, we acknowledge, in the strong language of practice, that he is a sovereign, who ought to be served, and served voluntarily. When we enjoy him, we prove, that in our view, he is an object, great and good, beautiful and desirable. When we exercise ourselves in all these ways *with supreme devotion of heart*, and make God the object of a regard, which admits of no comparison with any other, we testify, that he is greater, better, and more desirable, than all things; a Being, to whom none can be equal, none can be second.

II. *To glorify God is constituted by him, the chief end of Man.*

This truth is easily evinced in two ways.

1st. *God has, in the Scriptures, enjoined this conduct as the only duty of Man.*

Whatever God designed as the great end of the creation of man, he himself perfectly knew, unquestionably chose, and has certainly enjoined on man, if he has enjoined any thing. But this he has enjoined, and this is all which he has enjoined. This, at the same time, he has required with the promise of eternal life to obedience, and the threatening of eternal death to disobedience: both showing in the strongest manner, that he esteemed this End of sufficient importance to be secured, on the one hand, by the allurement of an infinite reward; and, on the other, by the terror of an infinite punishment. From this it appears, that he regarded the end as of infinite value; and that, since he has commanded nothing else, he esteemed nothing else as being comparatively of any value.

2dly. *From the nature of the case, it is evident, that this is the highest and noblest end, which man can accomplish.*

As this position will be rendered clearly certain by the considerations, suggested under the following head; I shall only observe here, that, admitting it to be true, the consequence follows in a manner, which allows of no debate.

III. *I shall now attempt to exhibit the propriety of this divine constitution.*

This, I think, will plainly appear, from the following observations.

1st. *When God created the Universe, he created it, that he might glorify himself.*

That this was the end of all the works of God, has, it is apprehended, been made sufficiently evident in a former discourse; and will, therefore, need no illustration at the present time. It ought to be remembered, that no addition to the inherent glory, or excellence, of the Creator, was possible; or is in this assertion supposed to have been possible. This, therefore, was not, and could not be, a part of the end, which he proposed in this great work. But his glory could be manifested; and the manifestation of it is what, both in the Scriptures, and in all sound theological discourses, is intended by the glorification of God. To show his own character, to unfold his power, knowledge, and goodness, to creatures capable of understanding them, was the supreme object, which he had in view, in the production of all beings, and all events.

St. John declares, that *God is love.* In other words, benevolence is the sum of his moral character, and the peculiar and distinguishing glory of his nature. This is that, which he himself esteems his glory; that, for which he chiefly values himself; that, which is the prime object of his own complacency. This perfection, then, he intended especially to manifest to his Intelligent Creation.

It is the essence of benevolence to love, and to produce, happiness; and, of infinite benevolence, to love, and to produce, infinite happiness. As, therefore, benevolence is the moving principle in the divine Mind, whence all its operations spring, and to which they are all conformed; it is evident, that, with knowledge sufficient to contrive, and power sufficient to execute, whatever it dictates, co-existing in the same Mind, all its dictates will of course be accomplished. The good, therefore, in which infinite benevolence delights, was originally chosen, has been actually begun, is uninterruptedly pursued, and will be absolutely completed.

2dly. *For the accomplishment of this end, he has created innumerable Creatures, capable of voluntarily co-operating with him in this great design.*

Angels and men, and probably many other beings, are formed in the image of God; and, like him, are possessed of the three great powers of understanding, will, and motivity. They are, therefore, capable, not only of being *passive subjects*, on which the glory of God can be displayed, and discerned; but of being also *Agents*, by whom his glory may be perceived, loved, enjoyed, and voluntarily promoted. The end, therefore, for which these beings were made, though generally the same with that for which inferior creatures were created, is essentially different, as to the manner in which it is to be accomplished by them. Inferior creatures,

such as exist in the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms, are means of the glory of God, merely as it is displayed in their nature, structure, and uses; while they, at the same time, are perfectly unconscious of being such means, and perfectly inactive towards promoting it: contributing to it merely as passive effects; just as a watch is a medium of displaying the skill of the maker. Intelligent beings, on the other hand, being possessed of active powers, are not only such displays of the divine glory in their nature and structure: but are able, also, to discern, so far as their powers extend, the desirableness of the divine glory, to choose it as the supreme object of all their designs and efforts, and to consecrate to the promotion of it, all their labours, throughout eternity. Such creatures, are of course capable of glorifying God in a twofold manner; viz. by the elevated and important endowments, of which they are possessed, and in the voluntary exertion of their active powers towards the accomplishment of the same end. Thus they are far more noble, exalted, and estimable, in the eye of God, than any other creatures.

3dly. *God only can direct all things to the accomplishment of this illustrious end.*

That there is a possible good, capable of involving all, which upon the whole is good and desirable; that immensity furnishes sufficient room, and eternity a sufficient duration, for its accomplishment; that God in his Omniscience comprehends this system, by his Omnipotence is able, and by his Goodness, or Benevolence, is disposed, to bring it into existence; and that consequently he has begun, and will accomplish it; are, unless I am deceived, truths too clear to be rationally doubted. I shall, at this time, take them, therefore, for granted.

But nothing is more plain, than that God only could originally have devised such a system: all other minds being, without a question, infinitely too limited for such a work. The beings and events, which it demands and contains, are innumerable and endlessly diversified; and one of them is far too difficult a contrivance to have been formed by any mind, less than Omniscient.

As God only could have devised this immense and glorious system at first; so none but God is, at the present or any other period of its existence, possessed *of sufficient Wisdom* to direct the innumerable parts of the vast machine, and their innumerable operations, to this great end. All the parts, and all their operations, are absolutely necessary to its perfect accomplishment. The failure of either, even in a single instance, would be a defect; and a defect attended with an importance, inconceivable by any mind, but His. The mischiefs, which would flow from such a defect in the progress of eternity, can be comprehended by no finite understanding. Accordingly he has informed us, that the least event does not come to pass; that *a sparrow does not fall to the ground;* that a hair does not fall from our heads; without his direction.

How evident is it then, that the management of the whole system demands his constant oversight, and control.

At the same time, *his Power*, as every man will readily acknowledge, is at least equally necessary for this purpose. The hand, which has ever rolled through the Universe the worlds of which it is composed, must still continue to roll them. The power, by which seasons revolve; days and nights return; light, and warmth, and rains descend; vegetation springs; animal and rational energy is quickened; the sunshine of Intelligence, and the flame of Virtue, are lighted up; by which the wheels of the universe were set in motion; and the regions of immensity and eternity peopled with being; must still continue its unremitted exertions, or the whole system would dissolve, and crumble into ruin.

Nor is *the divine Benevolence* less absolutely necessary for the same end. No finite good-will is sufficiently vast, sufficiently invariable, so superior to prejudice and provocation, so unassailable by temptation, so incapable of weariness, so unsusceptible of decay, as to be safely trusted with the ultimate conduct of so numerous, varying, and important interests.

Thus it is evident, that unless God devise, direct, and control, or, in a single word, manage with his power, wisdom, and goodness, the vast machine of the universe; the great and divine purpose, for which it was formed, can never be accomplished. This immense good, therefore, infinitely desirable to the eye of wisdom and goodness, and involving in itself all that is desirable, must otherwise fail of course; and nothing be left in its place, but desolation and ruin.

4thly. *Unless Intelligent beings voluntarily co-operate with God in promoting this great end, it can never be accomplished.*

This truth is easily evinced. God has assigned to Intelligent beings their voluntary co-operation with him, as a part, and a primary part, of the end itself. There is in such beings no other virtue, beside this voluntary co-operation. But the virtue of Intelligent creatures is, beyond all comparison, far the most important part of the whole end of Creation and Providence; the chief constituent of the divine glory; and the chief object of the divine complacency in created existence. At the same time, it is, under God, the supreme and indispensable source of all that happiness, which they were intended to enjoy throughout eternity. It is evident, therefore, that unless Intelligent creatures thus co-operate with their Creator; the end of their existence, and that of all things, can never be accomplished.

It may, perhaps, be objected here, *that this doctrine makes God dependent on his creatures for the execution of his pleasure.* This objection has, at least in my opinion, extensively deceived and misguided Christians; and among them, not a small number of divines. I have heretofore obviated it on a different occasion; but it may be useful to consider it again.

The Independence of God does not at all consist in the fact, that creatures are unnecessary to his purposes; for by making them, he has shown us, that they were thus necessary; *nor in the fact, that his happiness would have been equally perfect, if he had never begun the works of Creation and Providence;* for the Scriptures inform us, that *the Lord shall rejoice in all his works.* But, if he had formed no works, this part of his joy would have had no existence; and therefore his happiness would have been just so far incomplete. The independence of God consists *in his absolute sufficiency for the accomplishment of all his purposes; and in the absolute certainty, which that sufficiency furnishes, that all his purposes will be accomplished.* So long as these remain, he cannot but be absolutely Independent. The necessity of the existence, and voluntary co-operation, of Intelligent creatures to the purposes of God, affects not, therefore, his independence, in any manner whatever. On the contrary, it is a part, and a most important part, of those very works of God, which he has chosen and brought into existence, in which he rejoices, and will for ever rejoice.

It may be further objected, *that many Intelligent beings do not thus co-operate with their Maker; and that, therefore, he will, thus far, be disappointed, as to the accomplishment of his designs.* If this should be seriously said, I would refer the objector, for an answer, to the case of *Joseph's brethren*, together with his comment upon their conduct: *Ye meant it for evil; but God meant it for good.* From this case, as well as that of the *Assyrian* Monarch, as explained by God himself, *Isaiah* x. 5, to the end of the eleventh Chapter, and from many others, recorded in the Scriptures, the objector may learn, that evil beings by their disobedience as truly accomplish the divine purposes, as good beings by their obedience; and that, notwithstanding all their opposition, he will bring good out of the evil which they design; that *still his counsel will stand, and he will do all his pleasure.* But his pleasure would not be done, and his glory would not be displayed, in the same perfect manner, if no Intelligent creatures were to obey him by voluntarily co-operating with him in his designs. In this case, the whole face of the universe would be changed, and a new, gloomy, and distressing aspect be spread over the system of Creation and Providence.

5thly. *Intelligent creatures cannot thus co-operate with the designs of God, but by conforming to his direction.*

The coincidence of the heart with the general purpose of God, is undoubtedly the prime constituent of their obedience, or co-operation. But this is far from being all, that is necessary. As none, but God, can know, or direct, the things which are to be done; so it is evident, that his Intelligent creatures, in order to the promotion of his designs, must coincide with his directions. It has been already observed, that they cannot direct themselves; and that he alone can direct them. As every part of his designs is necessary

to their perfection; so it is plain, that *he*, who alone knows what is necessary, should universally direct the conduct of *them*, who do not. All their thoughts, desires, designs, and labours, must, therefore, be guided by him; and with an implicit confidence in his wisdom and rectitude, be entirely conformed to whatever he prescribes. To his *direction*, the heart must implicitly conform itself, as well as to his *general will;* and be disposed not only to glorify him, but also to glorify him in exactly that manner, which he is pleased to point out. Unless this manner be pursued; the object itself must eventually fail of its perfect accomplishment.

6thly. *In such a conformity of heart, and of effort, consists all the worth, and all the happiness of Rational creatures.*

God is the source, and sum, of all good, both moral and natural. To know and love him, is to know and love, in a sense, all that is excellent, great, and lovely. To serve him, is to do all that is amiable or desirable, all that is good or honourable, all that is pleasing to God or profitable to his rational creatures. True happiness, and true worth, are attained in the same manner, and by the same conduct. *It is more blessed*, says our Saviour, *to give, than to receive*. It is not merely more amply rewarded by God, but more happy in itself; necessarily, and in the nature of things, more happy. In other words, to do good is a more happy condition of being, than to receive good. But all worth consists in doing good, and in the disposition by which it is done. In this course of conduct, therefore, both happiness and worth are found with the highest certainty, and in the greatest degree; or, in better language, both are found here only. But doing good and glorifying God, are convertible phrases; denoting exactly the same thing, with one trifling exception: viz. that the former is sometimes used in a sense less extensive, than that which is commonly attached to the latter.

It is further to be observed, that in glorifying God, *the mind is engrossed by an object, which knows no limit*, and in which, therefore, its efforts may be for ever repeated, enlarged, and exalted. No law, nor consideration, demands, that it should limit its views, desires, or labours. Excess, here, is impossible. Approved alway by itself, and by its Maker, the more, the greater its efforts are, it sees no bound set to them, except by its capacity.

Beyond this, as doing good is the entire employment of every rational being, whose heart, and labours, are thus conformed to the pleasure of his Maker, *the good, actually done, cannot fail*, in the progress of the system, *of becoming immensely great*. Where the joint labours of any society are directed solely to the purpose of producing happiness, these labours, if wisely directed, must of course furnish happiness, proportioned to their extent, energy, and duration. In the divine kingdom, a society, greater than the human mind can estimate, all the members of which direct their labours by the unerring wisdom of God, contributing its united efforts

throughout eternity to the mere production of happiness, must effectuate this glorious object in a degree, transcending the comprehension of every mind, except the Omniscient. These efforts, it is to be remembered, are all made in circumstances the most auspicious, and with provision the most ample, for the great end of effectuating happiness. Happiness is the end of the *whole* system. The circumstances, and the means, by which it is to be produced, were devised by the Omniscience of God; and are better suited to the end, than any other, which Omniscience could devise.

At the same time, *this good is enjoyed in a manner wholly peculiar.* The excellent and disinterested spirit, which is thus employed in promoting the design of God, in the formation of the universe; the manifestation of his own glory in the accomplishment of the supreme good of his creatures; rejoices of necessity in all the happiness which is produced in other individuals, as in its own; and in that of the vast whole, with an ecstasy supereminent, and incapable of limitation. Thus both the spirit, which produces, and the spirit which enjoys, contribute, each in its own way, to the eventuation of more happiness, than can be originated by any other cause, or enjoyed in any other manner.

All this, however, is only the one, combined, immense, and divine effect of Infinite wisdom, power, and goodness. God is the original and glorious cause of all. To him, therefore, the eye instinctively looks, as the ocean, whence all these innumerable, and perennial, streams of enjoyment flow, and into which they return. His hand began, and will for ever continue, this amazing work; and will be seen, daily, and more and more clearly, uniformly, and divinely, in every thing, which takes place, both within and without the mind. *Of the increase of His government and* their *peace;* of the splendour and beneficence of his administrations, of the activity of their efforts, and the intenseness of their enjoyment; *there will be no end.* More and more beautiful and lovely in his sight, more and more approximating towards his sublime perfection, he will behold them with supreme and eternal complacency; will look with an unclouded smile on the illustrious work, which he has made; and with the voice of infinite approbation will pronounce it *very good.*

Such is the end, which God proposed in the creation of Man; such its nature; and such its propriety. How plainly is it the best and most glorious end, which can be aimed at by man or accomplished by his Creator!

From this fruitful theme many more important and practical reflections naturally arise, than can be even mentioned at the present time. It will, however, be highly proper to suggest a few of them; and these will be only suggested. In the contemplation of this subject, we can hardly fail to remark,

1st. *The pitiful nature of the ends of human existence, and human labour, proposed by heathen Philosophy, and modern Infidelity.*

The great ends of our being, exhibited by heathen philosophy,

were the gratification of pride, the establishment of apathy, the acquisition of power, wealth, and fame, and the enjoyment of animal pleasure. All these, except the second, are the ends, proposed also by modern Infidelity. By all except the last, they laboured to convert man into a fiend; and by that, to change him into a brute. Barely to descend from the divine object, which is the theme of this discourse, to these miserable purposes, is to fall from heaven to earth.

2dly. *It is plainly impossible, that these systems should guide man to his best good; and, therefore, that they should direct his moral conduct, either with rectitude, or profit.* The true end of his being, that which is really his supreme good, they knew not; and therefore could not point it out.

3dly. *These systems are hence evidently seen to be false.* There is a real supreme good to man. *Truth* will certainly guide us to this all-important object. But none of these philosophers have guided us to it. On the contrary, they have only led mankind away from it. Their systems, therefore, are essentially false.

4thly. *We see, here, the benevolent design of the Scriptures.* The whole design of the Scriptures is to teach man what is his supreme good, to show the way, in which he may attain it, and to require him to devote his efforts to the attainment. How infinitely superior are they, in this respect, to all human systems!

5thly. *The Scriptures are fairly presumed, from this consideration, to be of divine origin.* They alone disclose this great object to mankind; and in this respect, differ immensely from all other writings. Whence this difference? How can it be explained, but by supposing the writers of them to have been inspired?

6thly. *We learn hence the true dignity of man.*

The dignity of man has been always a favourite topic of his thoughts, conversation, and writings. When he looks into his own bosom, and discerns the nature and extent of his powers; or casts his eye abroad, and beholds what he has done; it is not strange, that he should form elevated ideas concerning his own character and destination. Unhappily, however, he has always formed, when left to his own speculations, erroneous opinions concerning this subject; and has placed his dignity in things, of which it can never be constituted. Personal accomplishments, brilliant or profound talents, extensive acquisitions of learning and science, ingenious inventions or improvements of art, bold achievements, and heroic exploits, have ever been the objects, in which he has supposed his dignity to consist, and of which he has ever been inclined to boast. Some of these are, indeed, both desirable and commendable; but all of them, by themselves, are utterly insufficient to constitute real dignity. This is found in the mind only. Intelligence is necessary to it; but of intelligence alone it cannot be constituted. Its real seat is in the disposition. Virtue, moral excellence, the beauty and loveliness of the mind, is the real and only dignity of an Intel-

ligent being. To devote all the faculties and labours to the glory of the Creator, in the pursuit of the supreme good of the universe, is the true worth, honour, and glory, of every Intelligent creature: and, compared with it, all things else, of which we are capable, are *nothing, less than nothing, and vanity.*

7thly. *We cannot but see in these considerations, the obligation, which we are under to devote all our faculties and labours to the promotion of this end.* This observation needs no comment.

8thly. *We also see, here, in a clear light, the necessity of Regeneration.*

The native disposition of man, is opposed to the end of his being. This disposition nothing has ever changed essentially, except the power of the *Spirit of truth.* As necessary, therefore, as it is, that Man should answer the end of his creation, so necessary is it, that he should become the subject of this change in his moral character.

9thly. *We discern in this subject the transcendent Excellence and Glory of God.*

All things display the glory of God; but some display it much more than others. In the scheme of creation, which has been now discussed, there is a splendour, wholly peculiar, attributed to JEHOVAH. In the end, proposed by Intelligent Beings in their designs, and displayed in their conduct, their proper character is especially manifested. The end, proposed by God, and displayed in his works of creation and providence, is unquestionably the noblest and most important of all possible ends, and the strongest proof of the best of all possible characters. It is the most finished, and the most ample, manifestation, of all that is great, exalted, lovely, and divine. Out of it, springs created Intelligence, virtue, and enjoyment, enlarged, refined, and brightened, for ever. Heaven and its immortal glory are its fruits; Angels, *and the Spirits of just men made perfect*, are its offspring. The Sun of Righteousness here rises on the astonished sight, without a cloud, and shines with the clear effulgence of eternal day. In the future world, that *Sun shall no more go down, neither shall* that Glory *withdraw itself;* but with a presence ever enjoyed, a lustre ever increasing, shall enlighten, warm, and quicken, the universe of virtuous minds with one unceasing day, one everlasting spring; while all that is beautiful, fragrant, and delightful, lovely in the eye of God, and a resemblance of his transcendent perfection, shall rise, and bloom, and flourish, beneath the life-giving influence, for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON XXVI.

PROVIDENCE.—THE PROBATION OF MAN.

GENESIS ii. 15—17.....*And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it, and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.*

IN several preceding sermons, I have considered *the work of Creation; including the heavens and the earth, their inhabitants and their furniture.* The next subject in a theological system, is *the Work of Providence.*

From the text, which is an account of the first act of Providence towards mankind, we learn the following things:

I. *That the Providence of God towards man began immediately after he was created.*

In the great and wonderful work of Creation, provision was effectually made for the production, subsistence, and comfort, of such beings, as were afterwards to exist in this world. By this observation, I do not intend absolutely, that no being has been, in the strict sense, created since the conclusion of the period, in which the Scriptures exhibit this work as having been accomplished. Whether this has, or has not, in the strict sense, been the fact, is not material to the present design. I intend, in the Scriptural language, *that the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.* The beings, which, during succeeding ages, were to exist in this world, whether in the rational, animal, or vegetable, kingdoms, were all, together with the changes in the mineral or inanimate kingdom, to be produced by the instrumentality of secondary causes. As man was the last creature, which was made; when *he* was formed, the work of Creation was finished. From this time, that superintending and controlling agency of God, commonly called Providence, commenced; and has ever since been unceasingly extended over all the works of his hands.

The Providence of God is two-fold; *ordinary and miraculous. Miraculous Providence, is an immediate agency of God in the production of events, adopted, at times, to accomplish certain ends, which would be less advantageously accomplished in any other manner. The ordinary Providence of God is an agency, directing the several creatures, which he has made, to the several purposes, for which they were made; and conducted according to certain rules, which he has been pleased to establish, and which are commonly, although improperly enough, called Laws of nature.* In the Scriptures, with much

more propriety as well as beauty, they are termed *Ordinances of Heaven*. In the succession of things, according to these ordinances, the power, wisdom, and goodness of God, are gloriously manifested in a series of events, beautiful and harmonious, wonderful and sublime, beyond any limit, assignable by the thoughts of man.

Before the Apostacy, these laws, and their effects, were, beyond a doubt, exceedingly different from those, which prevail at the present time. Man was then immortal, holy, and happy; and was destined to breathe in air, to feed on fruits, and to pursue employments, suited to the perpetuation of this delightful state. The world was beautiful and pleasant. All things were peaceful, friendly, and means of unceasing and undisturbed enjoyment. The sources of pain, hunger, and thirst, of disquiet, disease, and death, were unopened, and unknown. To a single end, was directed the whole energy of nature; and that end was the immediate good of man.

After the apostacy, a state of things began, which was in many respects new; a state suited to fallen beings, who were to live under many manifestations of the divine wrath against sin; and who in the end were to die, and thus cease from all future connexion with the place of their former residence.

After the Deluge, the state of the world appears to have been still further changed. More, and more painful proofs of the anger of God against Sin, were introduced into the system. Life, within a little time, was shortened from one thousand years to seventy. Labour, sorrow, and disease, were greatly enhanced. The bloom of immortality, already deeply faded, now withered away. Food, together with the whole train of necessaries, lost its power of prolonging life; sickliness overspread the vegetable kingdom; storms convulsed the air and the ocean; earthquakes and volcanoes shook the land; and decay and disorder impaired the whole face of the system.

II. *We learn also, that man, immediately after his creation, was placed in a state of active employment.*

The text declares, that *the Lord God took the man, and put him in the garden of Eden to dress it, and to keep it.* Activity of body, and of mind, is the sole means of doing good, and of glorifying God; and is, therefore, indispensable to the end, for which Intelligent beings were created. Hence man, like the Angels, was destined to be active; and was directed to industrious business, immediately after he was brought into the world.

III. *That he was, at the same time, placed in a state of Trial.*

By this I intend, that he was put into such a condition, as to show whether he would obey, or disobey, his Maker. The rectitude and reasonableness of this dispensation are easily evinced.

Man, as I flatter myself has been heretofore proved, was created a moral Agent, possessed of understanding and will, and therefore free, and capable of obeying. Of course, inability to obey could

not be pleaded by him, as a reason why he should be exempted from obedience.

At the same time, his Creator had an entire and indisputable right to his services. No property is so high, or so perfect, as that which the Creator has in the thing created; and no right so complete, as that which arises out of this property. God, therefore, having created man, had the most perfect property in him and the most perfect right to dispose of him according to his own righteous pleasure.

God, also, being possessed of infinite greatness and excellence, is infinitely deserving of the supreme love, reverence, and obedience of man.

To serve, love, and honour God, is the most rational, and desirable employment, which is possible. It was, therefore, man's highest interest, as well as indispensable duty, to obey. In no other manner, could he be either virtuous or happy. Of course, it may with the utmost reverence and propriety be concluded, that God would not have acted in a manner, conformable to perfect rectitude, if he had not required obedience from all his rational creatures: since they could neither do, nor enjoy, the good, of which they were made capable, in any other manner.

IV. *That the situation, in which man was placed, furnished him with eminent Inducements, and Advantages, to obey.*

The truth of this proposition will, I think, appear evident from the following particulars.

1st. *Man was created holy, without any mixture of sinful affections.*

This needs no proof, because it will be generally acknowledged, and because it has already been sufficiently proved in a former discourse. His understanding admitted truth without prejudice, and without any necessary error, except such as proceeded from mere ignorance. He did not know all things; but those, which he knew, he knew truly, or as they really existed. His will also was perfectly conformed to the dictates of his understanding.

2dly. *He was placed in a situation, in which eternal things were most favourable to his obedience.*

His habitation was delightful, and only delightful. Plenty, ease, and peace, fragrance, beauty, and joy, sprang up spontaneously around him; and accompanied him whithersoever he went. He was the lord and proprietor of a world; and that world was an Eden; a paradise of improvement and pleasure.

His employments were all innocent, virtuous, and delightful. In the happy and unlaborious agriculture, to which he was summoned, he found business congenial to his nature, powers, and wishes. Every thing flourished under his hand; and furnished him the peculiar pleasure of seeing his efforts contribute to his own enjoyment, and to the beauty and perfection of the objects, by which he was surrounded. He felt, that he was useful; that he was employ-

ed in a manner chosen by his Maker; and that he therefore pleased, and obeyed Him; while he also daily contributed to the advancement of his own happiness. This consciousness, united with an employment of the same general nature, is probably necessary to all extensive and permanent good.

All things, also, daily manifested to him the presence of God; and exhibited this glorious Being only as great, wise, and good; reminding him unceasingly of the Benefactor, to whom alone he was indebted, and of the immense extent of the obligations, under which he was laid by the overflowing kindness of this benefactor. Thus every thing with a continual voice called on him to persist in his obedience, and in this manner to preserve the happiness, which it insured.

3dly. *God immediately revealed himself to man in several ways, which are recorded, and in many more, which are necessarily implied.*

God taught man to dress the garden of Eden; or, in other words, communicated to him the knowledge of an agriculture, suited to the nature and circumstances of the spot, in which he was placed. It was necessary for man to be employed. Idleness, even in Paradise, would, not improbably, have proved fatal to his innocence and peace. Equally necessary was it, that the nature of his employment should be revealed to him; the manner, in which it might be pursued with ease to himself; and the means, by which it might be rendered most effectual to every desirable purpose. Without such a revelation, ages must in all probability have passed away, before he would have discovered how to employ himself with either convenience or profit.

At the same time, *God revealed himself to him immediately; and conversed with him freely, often, and familiarly; directing him by an audible voice, and in a manner wholly intelligible, to whatever his duty required.* To enable him to derive the whole benefit, flowing from such communications, *God endowed him immediately with the power of speech, and the knowledge of language, to an extensive degree.* This is clearly evinced by the fact, that he was able to understand the converse of God, with him, exhibited in the Scriptures as carried on by an audible voice, and significant terms; of the same nature with those, which are in use among men. It is proved, also, by the fact, that our first parents were created social beings, and made to be *helps meet for each other.* Without speech, we cannot conceive a social state to exist; nor imagine the mutual assistance, aimed at in the creation of the first pair, to be in any possible manner accomplished. Without speech, millions crowded together, would, for this very reason, find themselves in a more perfect solitude. Without speech, mutually understood, mankind even now are strangers and aliens to each other; and are not only unable, and uninclined to render to each other any material assistance, but are even ready mutually to suspect, hate, and separate.

Confidence is never reposed; friendship never springs up; where language is not understood, and where communications are not intelligibly, and definitely made.

It is further proved, by the record of the fact itself. *Adam*, immediately after his creation, *gave names to every beast of the field, and to every fowl of the air;* names suited to their respective natures, and conveyed down, as their appropriate names, to his posterity. He also named *Eve*, when she was first brought to him; and assigned his reason for the name, which he had chosen. Both he and she, also, conversed easily, and freely; as appears abundantly from the account, given of them, notwithstanding its brevity.

That language was revealed to man is, as an abstract proposition, abundantly proved by the impossibility, that the fact can have been otherwise. Without society, language could not be formed; and without language, society could not commence.

God also revealed to man, in direct and definite terms, his whole duty; and disclosed to him the law, by which his life was to be governed. With the same clearness, was he taught the rewards annexed to obedience, and the punishments due to disobedience. Of this truth we have a remarkable exemplification in the text; where we are presented with one of the principal rules, given to our first parents for the regulation of their conduct. Man, therefore, was not left to find out either his duty, or his danger, by the critical and doubtful decision of slow discovery, and distant inference; but received the knowledge of both in the same plain and certain manner, in which children are taught obedience by parental instruction.

4thly. *The immediate means of trial were reasonably, and benevolently selected.*

In the garden of Eden, the Lord God made to grow every tree, that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food. Man lived in the midst of spontaneous abundance. The palate and the eye were alike gratified; and the wishes seemed to have nothing left to ask. One fruit only was forbidden; and this merely for the purpose of trying his fidelity. Had man been placed in hard and difficult circumstances, encircled by few enjoyments, exposed to great temptations, and the subject of much ignorance and doubt concerning his duty; he would still have been indispensably bound to obey. But his real situation was the reverse of all this. God had given to him with the bounty of a God. Nothing was denied, which was either necessary or useful. A trifling gratification of either taste, or curiosity, was the utmost, which he could expect from disobedience. The continuance of all his enjoyments, endless life, and the favour of God, whom he saw both able and inclined to bless him, was the certain reward of obedience. No situation can be devised by our minds, in which man could have been placed more favourably for persevering in his duty. All motives, which we should think likely to influence, urged him to obey; and none, of this de-

scription, prompted him to disobey. The motives to obedience, were many; and in their moment infinite: those to disobedience, were few, poor, and trifling.

The law, under which our first parents were placed, is styled in the Scriptures, *the first, or old, Covenant;* and is commonly called by divines, *the covenant of works;* in distinction from *the new or second covenant,* of which Christ is the Mediator, and which is called *the covenant of grace.* A covenant of works is no other than a law requiring obedience, and prohibiting disobedience, promising a reward to the former, and threatening punishment to the latter. It takes, in this case, the name of a covenant, rather than that of a law, (although it has all the nature and sanctions of a law) because God was pleased to communicate his will to man in the form of a covenant: a mode gentle, condescending, and highly expressive of the divine benignity.

No being, already sinful, can be possibly holden guiltless under such a covenant; or, in better language, when tried for his conduct, *be justified.* His former crimes render it impossible, that it should become a covenant of life to him. To offer the conditions of such a covenant to beings of this character, would be merely to tantalize them; since by the very terms of it they would be originally fixed in a state of condemnation. Accordingly, when God proposed to place mankind, anew, in a state of probation, he *set forth Christ as a propitiation for the remission of sins, already past;* and offered to accept of his obedience in their stead, as the ground of their justification.

But sinless creatures are, with perfect and obvious propriety, placed under such a covenant. Their character, being spotless, is such, as to admit of their justification on the ground of their own obedience. If that obedience should, during the time of trial, be perfect; their justification and reward must follow, of course, from the conditions of the law itself; and no atonement could be necessary for them. Thus the holy Angels obeyed, and were justified. Thus *Adam* would have been justified, had he continued obedient. Thus, also, the evil Angels fell, and were condemned.

V. *We learn, also, that the obedience of Adam, as prescribed by this law, was concentered in a single point; and was thus rendered easy, and, so far as might be, secure, in a manner, strongly expressive of the goodness of God.*

If he ate not of the forbidden fruit; he was approved.

I do not intend, that he was not required to obey God in all things. This, unquestionably, was demanded of him, as well as of every other creature; and was, beyond a doubt, his indispensable duty. But I mean, that God absolutely suspended his acceptance, justification, and reward, on the single point of his abstaining from the forbidden fruit. This mode of dealing with *Adam* rendered his obedience peculiarly easy. It brought the duty, which he was especially required to perform, up to his view, in the

most distinct manner possible; and rendered it too intelligible to be mistaken. No room was left for doubt, or debate. The object in question was a sensible object, perfectly defined, and perfectly understood. No metaphysical or philosophical discussion was demanded, or admitted. No uncertainty existed, as to the degree, in which his obedience was required. He was left at no loss concerning the time, the manner, or the nature, of that conduct, which it was proper for him to observe. He knew the whole extent of what was commanded, and what was forbidden; and therefore could not but know whether he obeyed, or disobeyed. This knowledge, always of high importance, was especially important to *him*, so lately brought into existence, so unversed in argumentation, acquainted only with plain facts, and under the guidance of nothing, but mere common sense.

Besides, as his obedience was confined to a single point, he was taught, and enabled, to summon all his watchfulness, resolution, and strength, to this point only; to keep it supremely in view; and to be continually guarded against every thing, which might lead him to transgress, here. In making this the medium of trial, God secured him, of course, against all other dangers; so that he was left at full leisure to watch against all possible temptations to this single evil. Were an earthly parent to try the obedience of a child, and make his right to the inheritance of an estate depend on the performance of his filial duty: such a mode of trying him would be thought not only reasonable, but generous, noble, and strongly indicative of parental affection.

VI. *We learn from the text, that the rewards, promised to him, were infinitely great, and furnished, therefore, an infinite motive to obedience.*

That *Adam*, if faithfully obedient, would have inherited immortal life, and its various blessings, is evidently involved in the words of the law. *If thou eatest thereof, thou shalt die. If thou eatest not, thou shalt not die, but live for ever;* is the necessary counterpart; without admitting which, the threatening expressed would mean nothing, and the law become a mere nullity. For, in this case, his situation, whether he obeyed or disobeyed, would be exactly the same; and he would be left without a single motive to obedience. That the posterity of *Adam* have been essentially affected by his apostacy is not often denied; and, I think, cannot be, with even the appearance of reason. As I propose to discuss this subject hereafter, I shall, for the present, take this point for granted. If it be admitted; it must also be admitted, that they would have been equally interested in the benefits, which would have resulted from his obedience; and would, like him, have lived for ever. After the Apostacy, *he begat a son in his own* moral *likeness;* sinful and miserable, like himself. Had he obeyed, the children, begotten by him, would, without a reasonable doubt, have been born in his likeness also, and been destined, like himself, to unceasing

holiness and immortal life. It will not be denied, that the motives, here presented to obedience, were in themselves of infinite magnitude. They were also motives, coming directly to his heart; affecting him, as far as might be, with their whole importance; daily forced upon his view; and reasonably expected, if any thing could be expected, to prevail.

VII. *We learn, that motives equally powerful, lent their whole force to deter him from disobeying.*

The reward promised was immortal life; the punishment threatened was, I apprehend, eternal death. These two appear to be the only reward and punishment, ultimately promised and threatened, in the divine law, as the proper retribution of obedience and disobedience, in the great kingdom of JEHOVAH. As this subject will naturally be brought up to view, when I come to consider the sentence, pronounced on the offenders; I shall dismiss it for the present. What motives could possibly have greater influence on a thinking mind, than these? With what force, especially, must they be addressed to such a mind, as that of *Adam;* unbiassed by any influence of sin, loving obedience entirely, accustomed only to happiness, entitled to immortal life, and yet capable of losing finally this glorious state! What a contrast between these two objects: how affecting, how amazing.

REMARKS.

From these summary considerations it appears,

1st. *That God acted, in establishing the probation of our first parents, not only justly, but kindly and bountifully.*

In forming our own estimate of this subject, we are prone to consider chiefly, and often solely, the issue of their trial; which we cannot but acknowledge, as well as feel, to be, in the most striking point of view, incomprehensibly melancholy and dreadful. In this consideration, also, we are partial; as being deeply interested judges; since we are involved in the calamities, flowing from their transgression. But neither of these things ought to have any influence on our judgment concerning this subject. We ought to inquire only concerning the circumstances, in which they were placed, and the conditions prescribed to them. If these were reasonable and just; then God was reasonable and just in prescribing them; and that they were so, *even we* cannot deny.

That it is, in the nature of the case, right for God to try all his Intelligent creatures, cannot, I think, be rationally doubted; and that the trial of our first Parents was eminently reasonable in all its circumstances, appears to me unquestionable.

Their situation was clearly a strong proof of the bounty and kindness of their Maker; and was composed of abundance, peace, ease, and enjoyment, and attended by the living and delightful hope of superior good, unceasingly filling their continually enlarging faculties, views, and desires. It was necessary, that they

should be employed; and their employment was such, as ever since, notwithstanding the toil and suffering, by which it has been accompanied, has been most congenial to human nature, and most delightful to the human heart. How much more desirable must it have been in a state, to which toil and suffering were absolute strangers. Idleness would render even virtuous beings useless, and so far as I see, worthless. Virtuous action is all the real worth of Intelligent beings. Without it, there can exist no self-approbation, no peace of mind, no inherent dignity, no consciousness of excellence, no desert of esteem. To be employed, therefore, was indispensable both to the character, and to the happiness, of our first parents.

Their advantages for obeying, and their inducements to obedience, seem to have been in the best manner suited to such beings, as they were, and peculiarly expressive of the goodness of God. It is difficult to imagine how creatures, so lately introduced into existence, could have been, in this respect, placed in a more advantageous situation.

Of the circumstances of their trial, we are bound to judge, independently of its consequences. Had *Adam* stood, we should have never questioned the equity of the trial. We cannot, consistently with reason, any more question it now. Our estimate of this subject ought clearly to be formed on the conditions and circumstances themselves; as we should have formed it, had the conditions and circumstances been presented to us before the issue. In this case, we should not have hesitated to acknowledge either the justice, or the goodness, of the Creator. Whenever we now judge otherwise, our judgment does not proceed from reason and evidence; but is the mere offspring of prejudice and feeling.

2dly. *These considerations teach us, also, the extreme error and perverseness of those men, who, in the language of sneer and contempt, declare, that God cannot be supposed to have condemned mankind for the mere eating of an apple.*

I have here adopted the language, which has been often used concerning this subject, not by Infidels only, but by multitudes of such, as profess to believe the Scriptures. It is, however, not the language of reason and common sense, but of partiality and passion; of a most unhappy nature, and existing in a very censurable degree.

Nothing, in which God is concerned, or is supposed to have been concerned, can be the proper object of contempt or sneers, of sport or ridicule. Every thought concerning this great, pure, and awful Being, ought to spring from the most profound reverence; and, whenever expressed, ought to be uttered only in the most reverential terms. Especially are we bound to exclude all levity of mind from a case of such deep importance, and amazing concern, as the Apostacy of man: an event, which not only exposed the immediate subjects of it to the divine wrath, and the final sen-

tence of reprobation, but entailed also an endless multitude of miseries, as well as an endless course of depravity, on their sinning progeny. The exposure of a single human soul to the anger of God, and to the miseries of perdition, is a subject, too solemn to be taken up by a trifling mind, or discussed with a thoughtless tongue. When we are considering Sin and Condemnation, the guilt and miseries of the present life, or the endless corruption and sufferings of the life to come; whatever else may be in unison with these subjects, sport and sneer are only discordant; and jar, and grate, upon the ear of a sober man with a harshness, equally unsuited to the nature of the subjects, and distressing to every rational feeling. He, who can adopt sentiments of contempt and ridicule; and, still more, he who can utter them; in a case, where his all is at stake, is a madman, much fitter to grope in Bedlam, than to mingle with rational society.

The phraseology, here adopted, is totally unjust and unfounded, totally false and hollow. It insinuates, and *intentionally* insinuates, that God was influenced in his condemnation of our first parents by a resentment, excited only by the value, which he placed on the forbidden fruit; and that, as exhibited in this part of the Scriptures, he was moved by those weak and pitiful passions, with which men, at times, violently and foolishly resent the loss of their own property. As the value of the fruit was insignificant, and in a sense nothing; these men conclude, that God could not prize it so highly, as to be angry at the transgression, or to inflict punishment, much less so dreadful a punishment, on the transgressors. Were the principle just, on which they profess to argue; I readily admit, as every other man will admit, that God cannot be supposed to have punished them at all, for the reason alleged.

But the principle itself has no connexion with the subject: the argument, derived from it, is, therefore, without a foundation. The Scriptures neither here, nor elsewhere, present us with any such views of God. Nothing is more remote from the story actually told, or from the doctrines really expressed. Every thing, which is taught by the Bible concerning this subject, is highly solemn and affecting.

Our first parents were condemned, because they disobeyed their Maker, revolted from his authority, and rebelled against his government. Whatever was the mode, whatever was the instrument, of the rebellion; the sin was substantially the same. The same authority was denied; the same obligation broken; and, of course, the same guilt was thus far incurred. There is, however, a difference in transgressions, and a plain one, which renders the guilt greater in proportion to the smallness of the temptation. That disposition, which disobeys under the influence of a small temptation, is certainly worse than that, which, resisting such a temptation, yields only to inducements, which are very great. This rule of judging is universal; and in other cases, is acknowledged with-

out a question. It ought to be acknowledged here. Had *Adam* disobeyed, to gain the dominion of the Universe, or admission into Heaven; these men would have pronounced the trial unreasonable; because the temptation was evidently too great for his faculties, and disproportioned to his ability to resist. On the same principle, they ought now to acknowledge, that the trial was wholly equitable; because it allowed of no temptations, except such as were insignificant and trifling. Thus the argument is directly against them, and unanswerably refutes their favourite doctrine.

The fruit, whatever it was, was plainly of no importance, in the possession, to Him, who at his bidding, can in a moment call into existence a world, or a million of worlds, with all their furniture and beauty. Nor has it, in this sense, the most remote relation to the subject in hand. The guilt of our first parents lay solely in rebelling against the will of God; their Creator, Sovereign, and Benefactor. For this rebellion, they were justly condemned, if God can justly condemn a rebellious creature.

3dly. *We are taught by this passage of Scripture, in one important particular, the views which God entertains of sin.*

The sentence, here denounced against disobedience, is denounced against the first act. *In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.* The death, threatened in this law, is threatened to a single transgression. Accordingly, for a single transgression they were afterwards condemned.

How different is this exhibition of the mind of God, concerning this subject, from the views, which we are accustomed to cherish! We are prone to believe, that, even after numerous transgressions, nay, after the sins of a whole life, God will still regard us with so much favour, that we shall scarcely be condemned. Our first parents ate the forbidden fruit, and were condemned. How many things, apparently much more aggravated, have *we* done? Yet how greatly are we at ease concerning the divine anger, and our approaching destination. Under the persuasion, that we are not so sinful as others, and, indeed, that we are scarcely sinful at all, we hear the law, the transgression, and the penalty, awfully resounded in our ears; and hardly suppose ourselves interested in either. To the final judgment, and the final condemnation, of the wicked, we turn a careless self-satisfied eye; as objects, which, however interesting to others, have little or no reference to ourselves. Thus flattered, and supported, by views of our guilt utterly opposed to the Scriptures, and wholly contrary to those of God, we go on in the commission of Sin, without any serious alarm; and persuade ourselves, that, whether *the Lord will do good* to us, or not, *he* certainly *will never do evil.* In this deplorable manner, life is spent; the day of repentance trifled away; and the hope of redemption and forgiveness lost for ever.

But, let every sinner in this house remember, that he was condemned for his first sin; for the second; for the third; and for

every one which has followed. Call to mind then, I beseech you, the amazing number of transgressions, actually charged to the account of every sinner present. Think how many have been committed in a single day; how many more in a week; in a month; in a year. How astonishing must be the sum of those, which are committed in a whole life! The same God, who condemned *Adam* for one transgression, regards every sin, of which *you* have been guilty, with the same abhorrence. How awful was the sentence of condemnation pronounced on him! What then can *remain* for you in your present condition, but *a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation?*

SERMON XXVII.

PROVIDENCE.—THE TEMPTATION AND FALL.

GENESIS iii. 1—6.—*Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field, which the Lord had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened: and ye shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw, that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.*

IN the last discourse, I considered *the situation of our first parents in the state of trial, in which God was pleased to place them: and the conditions of the law, or covenant, under which they were placed.* These, I endeavoured to show, were just and reasonable; and such, as clearly spoke the benevolence of God.

In the text, we are informed of *the result of this trial;* viz. *that they transgressed the law, fell from their original purity, forfeited the favour and blessing of God, and were condemned to suffer the penalty of the law.*

In this remarkable passage of Scripture, *four things* especially claim our serious attention:

I. *The Character of the Tempter:*

II. *The Manner of the Temptation:*

III. *The Character, and Circumstances, of the Persons Tempted:* and,

IV. *The Consequences of the Temptation.*

I. *The Character of the Tempter demands our attention.*

The Tempter is exhibited to us, here, by the Name of *the Serpent:* or, as in the Hebrew, *that Serpent.* This phraseology naturally leads us to imagine, that a part of this discourse, as originally written, has been lost; altered, perhaps, by *Moses*, according to the commands of God; or, afterwards, by some prophet, according to the same command; because the passage had answered the end intended by it, and was not henceforth a necessary part of the canon of Scripture. Or, perhaps, it was originally differently written; and the present language is owing to some mistake of a transcriber. Of this Serpent, *St. John* declares, that he was *Satan;* the head, or leader, of those angels *who kept not their first estate,* but revolted from God, and threw off their subjection to his government.

This exalted being, unsatisfied with his dignity and glory in heaven, appears to have aspired to a station still higher, and to have chosen to hazard the loss of all which he possessed, rather than to continue in that, in which he was placed; a station, not improbably, the first in the created Universe. In thus aspiring, he fell from this height to the lowest depth of degradation, guilt, and misery; and completely verified the declaration of Christ, that such as have been *first will*, in various instances, *be last* in the great kingdom of God.

After his fall, the evil passions, which began to influence him in heaven, appear to have gained an entire ascendency. All his purposes have, since that event, been evil, mischievous, and abominable; and the means, by which he has laboured to accomplish them, have been base, grovelling, and suited to the nature of the purposes.

That, upon which he now entered, was probably as base, as hateful, as unjust, and as cruel, as was ever formed; and will, perhaps, be more remembered with horror, hereafter, than any other; unless we are to except the Rebellion, to which he successfully solicited his companions in heaven, and the Crucifixion of the Redeemer.

The motives, by which he was influenced to this work of death and destruction, were probably such as these.

His *Envy* was naturally and highly provoked at the sight of so humble a race of beings, as Men, possessing a character, and lot, plainly superior to his own; because they were immortal and holy, and consequently happy also; because they stood higher in the approbation of God, and the estimation of Angels; and because they were, in prospect, the heirs of immortal life and endless enjoyment.

His *Resentment against God*, which fired his rebellious spirit at all times, now saw, and seized, what he thought an advantageous opportunity, to disappoint his great Enemy of his favourite design; to overcast the face, and glory, of his new creation; to dishonour his name; to disturb again the peace of his kingdom; and to frustrate purposes, which seemed to be near, if not nearest, to his heart.

His *Pride*, also, was, doubtless, greatly gratified with the prospect of being able to disappoint his Maker; to counteract his designs; and to prove, that his wisdom was not so great, as to secure him from being thwarted, and vanquished, by this sagacity of his enemy.

Nor was his *Malevolence* probably less concerned in this enterprise. He had now become the professed, habitual, and eternal enemy of God, and of his creation. Good he regarded, wherever he saw it, with an evil and malignant eye, and an aching heart. That others were happy, was, to his debased feelings, a certain source of misery. The only emotions, which resembled happiness, in his mind, were now those, which, in the true fiend-like manner,

exulted in overcoming others, in destroying or lessening their enjoyments, and in reducing them to the same level of deformity and wretchedness with himself. These emotions could not but be strongly excited by the prospect of ruining a world of happy beings; such as were, and were to be, our first parents and their offspring.

For the gratification of these abandoned dispositions, he was prepared to employ any means. Accordingly, he chose rather to inhabit, and animate, a serpent, and ally himself to the brutes, than to fail of his design. In the body of this serpent he approached, and accosted, Eve; doubtless expecting, what actually took place, that both himself and his purposes would, in this way, be effectually concealed.

II. *The manner of the Temptation was remarkably distinguished by art and subtlety.*

He accosted the general Mother of Mankind, when she was alone, and of course most unguarded. Had *Adam* been present, it seems unquestionable, that both would have assisted each other; and that their mutual strength might have resisted, with success, the insidiousness, which was sufficient to prevail over one.

He began his address to her, with a question, which involved in it, apparently, not impiety, but surprise; and which was calculated, in the highest degree, to excite her attention and curiosity, without raising in her mind any alarm, or even suspicion. *Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?* "Can this be possible? What end can it answer? For what purpose were these fruits created, but to be eaten, and eaten by you? Whence then the prohibition? Or is it possible, that such a prohibition should exist?"

Had he directly opposed God, it is probable, that the honest mind of *Eve* would have revolted at the conduct; and fled from the temptation, with horror. But now, he said just enough to awaken her curiosity, and no more. Hence she was prepared to listen to him, to go on with him in his sentiments; and, in the end, to imbibe them all. The Question, in a manner not naturally seen, nor suspected, by her, awakened a train of thoughts, in themselves dangerous, and leading easily to a fatal issue.

Eve, in the native simplicity and integrity of her heart, replied, *We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden. But of the fruit of the tree, which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, nor shall ye touch it, lest ye die.*

This answer brought the subject immediately to the point, which the tempter wished; and gave him a fair opportunity, without directly denying the divine prohibition, to seduce the heart of his victim. He replied accordingly, *Ye shall not surely die. For God doth know, that, in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened; and ye shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil.*

Nothing could, in such circumstances, be more artfully conduct-

ed. It was not a difficult thing, in itself, to persuade *Eve*, that she should not die. Death was an evil, whose nature she could but very imperfectly comprehend, and of which she had known no example. But of the pleasantness of the fruit, its fragrance, and beauty, she had a distinct comprehension. She also, in all probability, knew, in some degree, the character of those *gods; Elohim*, that is, *Angels;* to whose nature, knowledge, and dignity, she was to rise by eating the prohibited fruit. At the same time, he applied directly to the only object which was likely to be to her an object of desire. She and her husband were surrounded with good; and had nothing to regret, and nothing to fear. Their only danger seems to have been on the side of coveting more, because they already had so much; and of wishing, because they were now so wise and happy, to become wiser and happier. The Tempter, by his own experience, perfectly understood the power of this mode of attack, and the proper avenue, through which to introduce the temptation. *Eve* knew, that Angels were superior to her, as she was superior to the brutes; and probably knew not, but that this was the way in which they became Angels. These views would naturally make her consider the tree, as wholly to be *desired to make one wise;* and lead her to forget the danger of disobedience.

At the same time, the boldness and impudence of the Tempter's assertions, probably astonished and confounded her. There is something in the confidence, with which, at times, assertions are made, which has always more or less commanded belief in the ignorant and inexperienced; such as she was at this time. To her he appeared to understand the subject in a manner, of which she had never before formed a conception; and the boldness and peremptoriness of his declarations gave them such an air of truth and wisdom, as she was unprepared to resist. Nor did he fail to avail himself of the influence of that passion, which is so universal, so easily kindled, and so powerfully operative, in the minds of all her descendants; viz. *Jealousy. God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as Gods.* In this speech, he artfully, but evidently, insinuated, that the true reason, why the tree was forbidden, was, that God knew this to be its nature and efficacy; that the prohibition was, therefore, insincerely and unkindly made; and that the whole proceeding, on the part of God, was sinister, selfish, and oppressive.

This procedure gave an entirely new aspect to the character and conduct of God; and to a mind, beginning to be tinctured with jealousy, rendered that character unamiable, and that conduct suspected and unworthy.

When this was accomplished, and *Eve* had let go her hold on her glorious benefactor, till then absolutely loved, venerated, and trusted; she was prepared for every thing, which could follow. A little contemplation of the fruit itself, after she had begun the

course of infidelity in her heart, led her, as temptations have always led the heart of unbelief, to direct transgression and open rebellion. To eat it, she now perceived, would at once gratify her taste, and raise her to the envied distinction, which was promised.

Such is the summary account, which God has thought proper to give us in his word, of one of the two most important transactions, which this world has ever seen. A part only, and not improbably a small one, of the events, which actually took place, is recorded. That various other things passed on this occasion, cannot be doubted. Beside the abruptness of the introduction, the first question appears to be asked in consequence of something, which had preceded. These outlines the great English Poet has filled with several natural and interesting circumstances, which, or something like which, may not improbably have happened. It is not difficult to believe, that the serpent may have alleged, that he himself had eaten of the fruit, and had not died; but, on the contrary, had gained, from its mysterious and happy influence, the powers of understanding and speech, with which he appeared to be elevated above his kindred brutes.

Be this as it may; it seems evident, that the story, as here told, is either the close, or the epitome, or both, of a full account of the transaction. Yet, as it is, it is a specimen of consummate art, insidiousness, and fraud. The manner of address, on the part of the serpent, is calculated insensibly to insinuate, and inspire, jealousy and irreverence towards God; uneasy and repining thoughts of the condition, in which man was placed by him; ardent ambition to be like Angels in knowledge, happiness, and glory; and longing desires to eat the forbidden fruit for this end; together with strong hopes, that no evil consequences would follow the transgression.

III. *The character of the persons tempted, was probably singular.*

They were newly created; were innocent; were holy; and, considering the short period of their being, were undoubtedly possessed of no small discernment in divine things. They loved truth; were free from all biasses and prejudices; possessed a vigorous understanding; and thus were prepared for a ready reception of every truth, and for a rapid progress in useful knowledge. The progress, which they actually made, must have been great, under such advantages, compared with what, at first thought, may seem probable.

Still they were imperfect beings; without experience; and destitute of knowledge in many particulars, which would naturally be wished in a case, where art and falsehood were employed against them; and, although furnished with a clear comprehension of their own duty, were totally ignorant of the character, and unable readily to conjecture the designs, of their Adversary. The first deceit, which they ever knew, was now practised on themselves; and the first falsehood, of which they ever heard, was now directed to their own destruction. Of the rebellion of the Angels, they probably

knew nothing; and of the character of the Tempter, they would not naturally form even a suspicion. Accustomed to hear only truth, they would not easily expect a lie; and, habituated only to faithfulness and friendship, fraud and malevolence were, in their approach to them, assured of a necessary, and sufficient, disguise. That artless, child-like simplicity, which so delights the mind, and embellishes the pictures of the historian and the poet; which adorned the life, and endeared and enforced the lessons of the Redeemer himself; and which now constitutes no small part of evangelical excellence; was then a principal trait of their character. In the peculiar kind of wisdom, which we call prudence, they certainly had made little progress; and caution must have been known to them, only in lessons of instruction.

Thus they were, in several important respects, beings fitted for imposition, and not unnaturally the victims of insidiousness and cunning. The same means, at the present time, ensnare persons of the same character; and it is not in the nature of things, that superior sagacity, however employed, should not possess the power of influencing, more or less, the same simplicity. Firm obedience, such as they were bound to render to their God, a prompt undeliberating refusal, and an original, steadfast determination not to listen, would have secured them from yielding; but, when they began to hear, and to investigate, they began to be exposed; and their danger increased with every step of their progress in inquiry.

In the mean time, it seems, that neither of them thought of supplicating the aid of their Creator. A single prayer would have put the Tempter to flight, and dissolved the charm of the Temptation. A single recollection, also, of his commands, his kindnesses, and his instructions, might easily have produced the same effect. But neither prayer nor recollection was summoned to their assistance. Like their descendants, when forgetful of God, and, in a sense, forgotten by him, they were weak, frail, and exposed to every danger.

IV. *The consequences of the temptation were, as you well know, eminently unhappy.*

Eve, pleased with the appearance of the prohibited fruit, and warmed with the thought of becoming wise, of leaving her present humble station, and assuming that of an Angel, rashly ventured on the forbidden ground; disobeyed the command of her Creator; defiled herself with sin; and yielded her title to immortal life. In the same manner *Adam*, also, partook of the transgression, and of all its miserable effects; lost his innocence; and resigned his dominion, glory, and happiness. The remoter consequences of this event, I shall have occasion to consider in a future discourse. The remainder of this, I shall occupy with some considerations on *two great questions*, often and earnestly asked, concerning this subject, and with *a few practical remarks*.

The first of the questions, to which I have referred, is this; *Since our first Parents were entirely holy, how could they become sinful?*

This question, in its simple and proper form, is no other than,

How can a holy being become sinful? or,

How can a holy being transgress the law of God?

This question, to which, perhaps, no satisfactory philosophical answer can be given, has been unnecessarily embarrassed by the modes, in which answers to it have been attempted. The language, often adopted, has been in a great measure abstract; and, being supposed to have meaning, when it had none, and to convey ideas, which it did not contain, has served only to bewilder, where it was intended to instruct.

The common method of conducting the investigation of this subject has been to seek for some cause in the nature of man, styled *a principle of action*, to which this effect might be fairly attributed. As the principles of moral action in *Adam*, must have been holy, and could in no degree have been sinful; it is inquired, *How could a holy principle be the cause of a sinful action?*

It will be obvious to a careful examiner, that in this inquiry, the word *principle*, is intended to denote a fixed, unchangeable cause; productive only of effects, of the same moral nature; and is supposed to exist, and to operate, during the interval of transgression. On this foundation, the inquiry is made; and, if the foundation be solid and just, the inquiry cannot be answered: because, in the actual case, viz. the case of our first Parents, there was no other principle of action, beside a holy principle.

But in this scheme of thought, there is a plain and important fallacy; not improbably originated, and certainly established, by the use of the word *Principle*. I do not deny; on the contrary, I readily admit; that *there is a cause of moral action in Intelligent beings, frequently indicated by the words Principle, Affections, Habits, Nature, Tendency, Propensity*, and several others. In this case, however, as well as in many others, it is carefully to be observed, that these terms indicate a cause, which to us is wholly unknown; except that its existence is proved by its effects. There is, as every man, who does not embrace the doctrine of casual, or contingent, existence, must admit, a reason, *why one being is holy and another sinful; or why the same being is holy at one time and sinful at another;* as truly, as that there is a reason, *why he exists.* There is also a reason, *why a being is, at some times, more strongly inclined to a regular practice of sin or holiness, than at others.* Our judgment concerning moral beings, is customarily formed in accordance with these truths. We speak *of human nature as sinful;* intending *not the actual commission of Sin, but a general characteristic of man, under the influence of which, he has committed Sins heretofore, and is prepared, and is prone, to commit others.* With the same meaning in our minds, we use the phrases, *sinful propen-*

sity, corrupt heart, depraved mind; and the contrary ones, *holy or virtuous disposition, moral rectitude, holiness of character*, and many others of the like import. When we use these kinds of phraseology, we intend that a reason really exists, although undefinable, and unintelligible, by ourselves, why one mind will, either usually, or uniformly, be the subject of holy volitions, and another, of sinful ones. We do not intend to assert, that any one, or any number, of the volitions of the man, whom we characterize, has been, or will be, holy, or sinful; nor do we, indeed, design to refer immediately to actual volitions at all. Instead of this, we mean to indicate a state of mind, generally existing, out of which holy volitions may, in one case, be fairly expected to arise, and sinful ones, in another: such a state, as that, if it were to be changed, and the existing state of a holy mind were to become the same with that of a sinful mind, its volitions would thenceforth be sinful; and *vice versa*. This state is *the cause*, which I have mentioned; a cause, the existence of which must be admitted, unless we acknowledge it to be a perfect casualty, that any volition is sinful, rather than holy. This cause is what is so often mentioned in the Scriptures, under the name of *the heart;* as when it is said, *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.* I have already remarked, that this cause is unknown, except by its effects. From these, however, we learn, that it is not so powerful, nor so unchangeable, as to incline the mind, in which it exists, so strongly to holiness, as to prevent it absolutely from sinning, nor so strongly to sin, as to prevent it absolutely from acting in a holy manner. Both Revelation and facts, the only sources, from which we derive any knowledge of the subject, place this truth beyond a reasonable debate. Beings, who have sinned, have afterwards become holy; and beings, who have been holy, have afterwards sinned; and nothing more seems necessary to explain this subject to us sufficiently, than barely to suppose, what we cannot avoid supposing, *that a temptation, actually presented to the mind, is disproportioned in its power to the inclination of that mind towards resistance.*

I have now, I flatter myself, prepared the way for introducing the only intelligible, and in any degree satisfactory, method of examining this subject; which is, *to consider the man, and the facts; and not the abstract principles.*

In this view, the case stands thus: God created a moral being, capable, in the nature of things, of either sin or holiness. Originally, this being was holy; that is, disposed to obey the will of God; possessing a state of mind propense to virtuous, and opposed to sinful, conduct. Fitted by his moral nature to be operated on by motives, as all moral beings are, he was placed in a world, filled with motives; of which some induced to obedience, and others to disobedience. Wherever the means of happiness and misery exist, such motives exist of course; and of both kinds; for these means, themselves, are the motives; or perhaps more pro-

perly the happiness and misery are the motives. Now it is plain, that in such a world, (and all possible worlds, except a world of perfect misery, must be such) motives of both kinds must, at times, be present to the view of such a being. It is equally evident, that some of the motives to sin, may, considered by themselves, become to such a being stronger inducements to action, than some of the motives to holiness. In other words, higher enjoyment may be found, or expected, in some courses of sin, than in some courses of holiness. That to a mind, capable of contemplating one or a few things, only, at once, and of feeling with different strength, at different times, the motives to sin may chiefly, or alone, be present, will not be doubted. For, it is apprehended, no finite watchfulness is sufficient to realize, with absolute certainty, the full presence of the motives to holiness at all times; nor to keep out of view all the motives to sin. Of course, every such mind may, for aught that appears, be induced by some supposable motive, or combination of motives, at some times, and in some circumstances, at least, to yield to temptation, and disobey.

There is no proof from *the nature of things*, that finite strength and stability are sufficient to resist all possible motives to sin. From *facts*, we are irresistibly led to admit the contrary doctrine. Angels, though entirely holy, yielded to such motives; as did our first Parents also, who possessed the same virtuous character. These facts furnish a strong presumption, at least, that it is not within the limits of created perfection to resist temptation in all possible cases; and that the final perseverance of saints and Angels, both in a state of trial, and in a state of reward, is derived ultimately from the Almighty Power of God.

In a former discourse, I observed, that *there were three methods, in which sin, or moral evil, is supposed to have been introduced into the universe.* The first is, *that he permitted it to exist.* One of the remaining *two* is, *that* God *could not, without destroying the free agency of his creatures, prevent them from sinning:* the other, *that he creates their sinful volitions.*

To the former of these methods of accounting for the introduction of sin, it is unanswerably objected, *that* God *has actually preserved some of the angels from falling; and that he has promised to preserve, and will, therefore, certainly preserve, the spirits of just men made perfect;* and *that this has been, and will be, done without infringing at all on their moral agency.* Of course, he could just as easily have preserved *Adam* from falling, without infringing on his moral agency. To *the second scheme*, I object in the

1st. Place, *That it is wholly without proof.*

But a doctrine of this magnitude, ought not to be admitted without the most ample evidence.

2dly. *It is unnecessary.*

All the satisfaction, which this subject admits, is capable of being derived as completely from attributing this event to the agency

of creatures, as to the agency of God. At the same time, it is as easy to conceive, to evince, and to admit, that man is an agent, as that God is an agent. No difficulty attends the former case, which does not in an equal degree attend the latter. If man is an agent, then there is no necessity of tracing his actions beyond himself. We find no necessity, when we think of God as an agent, of tracing his actions beyond himself. There is no more necessity of tracing human actions beyond man; nor is there, so far as I can perceive, any additional light thrown on the subject of human agency, by referring our actions to God. That God created us; that he can, and does, influence our actions in various ways, as he pleases; and that even *we* can in various ways influence the actions of each other; must be admitted on all hands. But I see no proof, that God is the author, or agent, of human actions; nor the least difficulty in believing that he has made us capable of being the agents, and authors, of them, ourselves.

3dly. *It increases the difficulties, which it professes to remove.*

It is at least as difficult to conceive how God can be the author of actions, existing in a human mind, as how that mind can be the author of them. Here, therefore, no advantage is gained. On the other hand, difficulties are multiplied without end. No conception is more perplexing, or distressing, than this; that God creates our sin by an act of his Omnipotence, and then punishes it.

4thly. *The Scriptures no where assert this doctrine.*

The passages, commonly alleged in support of this doctrine, appear, to me at least, to be forced from their natural, obvious interpretation, for this purpose. Nor ought it to be admitted, that a doctrine of this importance would be taught in ambiguous and obscure passages only. A strong support of this opinion, is found in the copiousness, variety, and explicitness of the passages, in which the Scriptures teach us the agency of God in our sanctification. This important distinction between the two cases, ought to have its full weight with our minds; and should, I think, be considered as decisive.

Should it be here objected, *that the scheme, which I am contending for, is opposed to the doctrine of* God's *agency in our sanctification:* I deny the objection to be true. The Scriptural doctrine of sanctification does not, I apprehend, teach us, that he is the author, or Creator, even of our holy volitions. On the contrary, Scriptural regeneration *is the creation, not of our volitions, but of such a state, temper, or disposition, that the mind itself produces other volitions, than those which it would have produced in its former state. After regeneration,* God *affects the mind in sanctifying it, in the manner commonly denoted by the word influence; and not by a work of creation, continually carried on in the mind.* Hence God is said *to sanctify his children by his Word, as well as by his Spirit.* But it is impossible, that his Word should any way be concerned with the creation of new volitions.

To these observations it ought to be added, that several of the objections, heretofore alleged against the doctrine, *that the soul is a mere chain of ideas and exercises*, lie with equal weight against this. These have, however, been too lately mentioned, to demand a repetition.

The second question, to which I have referred, and which, like the other, affects not the sin of Adam only, but all sin, is this: Why did God permit ADAM *to fall?*

Before I attempt to answer this question, it will be proper to observe, that according to all the schemes of accounting for the introduction of moral evil, which have been mentioned, the fall of *Adam* was permitted, that is, was not hindered, by God. It may be also proper to state the difference, which in my own view exists, between permitting, or not hindering, sin, and creating it. It is this. *In the former case, man is the actor of his own sin.* His sin is, therefore, wholly his own; chargeable only to himself; chosen by him unnecessarily, while possessed of a power to choose otherwise; avoidable by him; and of course guilty, and righteously punishable. Exactly the same natural power is in this case possessed by him, while a sinner, which is afterwards possessed by him, when a saint; which *Adam* possessed before he fell; and which the holy Angels now possess in the Heavens. This power is, also, in my view, perfect freedom; a power of agency, as absolute as can be possessed by an Intelligent creature.

In the latter case, the volitions of man are immediately produced by Omnipotence; are the acts of God himself, and not at all of man; are merely annexed to man, as accidents; are in the natural sense necessary, and irresistible; and, so far as I can see, are in no sense chargeable to man.

In the former case, God is supposed to create beings, possessed of the full power to originate any, and every, moral action; in the natural sense, able to stand, as well as liable to fall; and falling, only because they did not make the best use, which they could, of their power to stand. In the latter case, he created their apostacy. Their fall, therefore, was irresistible; unless it should be proved that a creature can resist Omnipotence.

With these things premised, I observe in answer to this question, that a state of trial supposes of course a capability of falling, and cannot exist without. That, in this state, God is obliged to secure his creatures from falling, has not hitherto been proved; and certainly ought not to be admitted, without proof. If he rewards them with happiness, proportioned to their obedience, so long as they continue obedient; I see not how any thing further can be demanded at his hands. Perfect justice seems in this case to be satisfied.

Still it will be asked, why God suffered a thing, so evil and distressing, as sin, to exist.

Probably the best answer, ever given to this question in the pre-

sent world, is that, which was given by Christ, concerning one branch of the divine dispensations to mankind: *Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.* It was a dispensation approved by infinite Wisdom, and seen by the Omniscient eye to be necessary towards that good, which God proposed in creating the universe.

The restless and roving mind of man is, however, often unsatisfied with this answer. I will, therefore, add by way of explanation, and, I hope, with that profound reverence, which all creatures owe to their Creator, and that diffidence, which becomes a creature of yesterday, that if *Adam* had not fallen, Christ would not have redeemed mankind: for had there been no Apostates, there could have been no Redeemer, and no Redemption. The mercy of God, therefore, the most perfect of his attributes, and the consummation of his excellence, would have been unknown to the universe. All the blessings, bestowed on mankind, would have been the reward of the obedience of *Adam*, and his posterity. But the blessings, bestowed on glorified saints, are the rewards of the obedience of the Eternal Son of God. These rewards could not have been given, had not Christ obeyed: and Christ could not have obeyed, had he not become the Substitute for sinners, or the Mediator between God, and apostate creatures. These rewards, also, will differ from those in the former case, as the respective persons, who obeyed, differed in the excellence of their characters, and the value of their obedience.

Had *Adam* obeyed; it is, I think, highly probably, that the original world would have continued, and the present Heavens. The new Earth, and the new Heavens, which will be created after the Mediatorial Kingdom is finished, would never have been. No human beings would have been admitted into Heaven. None of that joy would have been experienced, which now springs up in heavenly minds over the repentance and salvation of sinners, and which will increase and brighten for ever. None of those things, *into which Angels desire to look*,* would have been brought into being; nor would that glorious purpose of the creation of all things, mentioned by the Apostle, the knowledge, acquired by *principalities and powers in heavenly places, concerning the manifold wisdom of God*, disclosed in his dispensations to his *Church*,† have ever been accomplished.

By the redemption of Christ, Heaven as well as Earth, Angels as well as men, are materially changed from their former circumstances, and character. Nay, the whole immense and eternal kingdom of JEHOVAH, by means of this amazing work, assumes a new aspect; and both Creation and Providence, are invested with a new character. God is seen by his Intelligent creatures in new manifestations of beauty, glory, and loveliness. Throughout never-

* See 1 Pet. i. 12. † See Eph. ii. 9, 10.

ending ages, virtuous minds will be enlarged with knowledge, exalted in holiness, and improved in dignity, and happiness, beyond all, which would have otherwise been proper, or possible; and their affections, obedience, and praise, become more refined, and more elevated, in a rapid and regular progress. The former legal system, therefore, of which the primitive state of *Adam* was a part, had comparatively *no glory, by reason of the excelling glory* of the system of Redemption.

How far these observations may contribute to the satisfaction of the inquirer, I will not presume to determine. That the system of divine dispensations is now, and will for ever be, widely different from what it would have been, had the work of Redemption not taken place, must, I think, be acknowledged. I will only add, that, as *we are of yesterday, and* consequently *know nothing*, it is not, and cannot be, strange, that things of this extent should be so *high*, and so vast, that *we cannot attain to them.*

Should an emmet, from the top of his mole-hill, undertake to survey the world around him; and to descant on the beauty, or deformity of the landscape, the suitableness of the soil, climate and accommodations, for the settlement, health, husbandry, and commerce, of men; and propose plans for the improvement of some of these things, and the reformation of others; we should probably consider him as a very imperfect judge of such subjects; and smile both at his presumption, and his philosophy. With respect to the subject in hand, *we* are emmets; and take our surveys only from the top of a mole-hill. When it is considered, that the consequences of this event reach through eternity, and that such wonderful consequences, have already followed it, a small share of modesty will induce us to confess our inability to judge concerning it, and to take the station of humble learners, at the feet of our Divine Instructer, rather than to ascend the chair of philosophical judgment, and haughty decision.

REMARKS.

1st. *In this difficult part of the history of man, we cannot, I think, fail to see, how superior the Scriptural account of the introduction of Moral evil, into the world, is to every other.*

The Scriptural account is summarily this. Two beings, the parents of mankind, created holy, and placed by God in a paradise of good, were deceived, and seduced, by the insidious art of an evil and superior being, permitted for wise and good purposes, to have access to them.

The two principal schemes of philosophy on this subject, are these:

First; *That the soul was created holy, and was contaminated by being united to Matter; because Matter is the seat of sin, and pollution:*

Secondly; *That the soul was created holy, but apostatized in a pre-existent state.*

Of the *first*, it is sufficient to say, that it is contrary, not to truth only, but to possibility: since it is clearly impossible that any being, except a thinking, voluntary one, should be the subject of either virtue or sin.

On the *second*, it is to be observed, that all the difficulties attend it, which attend the supposition of an apostacy, in the present state. The difficulty does not at all lie in the fact, that man apostatized *here*, but, in the fact, that he apostatized *at all*. Of course, whether we suppose the apostacy to have taken place in this world, or in another, the difficulties involved in it, still remain possessed of their full strength, and without being, in the least degree, obviated.

Besides, that man did pre-exist, is a mere assumption, of which, there is not a shadow of evidence; and against which, even the light of nature furnishes strong probability.

2dly. *In this story, we see the amazing evil of sin, manifested in the conduct of the Tempter.*

What a disposition was that, which was exhibited, in the seduction of our first parents from their obedience! From what a state of innocence and happiness, did it plunge them and their posterity! At the same time, no personal resentment operated, no revenge burned in his breast against them; for between him and them, there had never been a controversy, nor even a connexion. They were ignorant that such a being as himself existed, and had never done, nor wished him, any evil whatever.

But he envied, he hated their virtue, their happiness, and their prospects. Under the influence of these infernal feelings, he laboured to destroy them, and a world with them; and voluntarily entailed on countless millions of Intelligent beings, sin, and wrath, and ruin. How vast, how wonderful, how dreadful, is this malice! How hateful is he in whom it resided! Such is the true nature of all Sin. In degree, it may differ: in kind, it is the same.

Let it be here remembered, that every Tempter is employed, substantially, in the same manner. Every Tempter, in seducing a fellow-creature, is influenced by sin; and tempts to sin. The person tempted is induced to disobey God; to become guilty and odious; to incur his anger; and to expose himself to the miseries of the second death. What a dreadful employment is this! Yet how common! how evidently universal! No language seems sufficiently forcible to describe the turpitude of a murderer, or a traitor. But how guiltless does the murder of the body seem, when compared with the murder of the soul! What treachery can be named with that, which cheats an immortal being out of heaven, and deceives him into hell?

Nor is the mode, in which temptations are usually conducted, any other, than that recited in the text. In every temptation, the

truth of God is denied; his wisdom or goodness questioned; his conduct exhibited as strange, and his commands as unreasonable. Obedience is always represented as exposed to disadvantages; and sin, as the true road to real and exquisite enjoyment. Jealousy is thus naturally kindled; discontent excited; and the man induced to repine at his lot, to murmur, in thought at least, against his Maker, and to covet and seek forbidden enjoyments.

In the mean time, the soul is flattered perpetually with the hope of safety in sin; is taught to expect exemption from punishment; and is boldly informed, that *it shall not surely die*. Thousands and millions of times has this story been told; and repeated through every age, from the apostacy to the present hour. Thousands and millions, also, of foolish and unhappy wretches, listen to the tale, because it is loved; and receive it on a tenth part of the evidence, which they would demand, to enforce on their minds a single truth, or a single duty: or rather, they receive it first; and wait for the evidence till some future time. *Eve* is often censured for yielding to a tempter, of finished cunning. How many of her descendants yield to fools and blockheads, to gross and blundering solicitations; unfurnished with even a plausible pretence, or that miserable consolation to sinners, an apology for the compliance! Let no one cast the first stone at our common Parent, who is not conscious that he himself has not sinned in the same manner.

3dly. *We learn from this story, that the only time of successful resistance to temptation, is the moment, when it is presented.*

I have already remarked, that had our first parents promptly refused to listen, they would, in all probability, have escaped the snare. What is true of them, is true of all their posterity. The very act of deliberating, results from want of sufficient faith in God, and sufficient firmness in our duty. In our deliberations, also, we are exposed to many dangers. We are ignorant, yet believe ourselves knowing; foolish, yet are vain of our wisdom; weak, yet are always ready to confide in our strength. Hence we form false conclusions from miserable premises: yet we think both the premises and conclusions sound, because they are devised by such sagacious beings, as ourselves. In our love to sin, we have an enemy within us, of whose presence, or even existence, we are usually not aware, ever ready to aid the assaults of the enemy without. From our ignorance, we are easily perplexed; from our vanity, easily flattered; and from both, easily overcome. Of our perplexity, every tempter takes advantage, while he covers the hook with a bait for our vanity. The more we reason, the more we plunge ourselves into difficulties; and the less hope do we find of an escape. The longer the assault continues, the more feeble, embarrassed, and irresolute do we become; and the more bold, powerful, and assured, our seducer: till, at length, that resolution and understanding, which at first would have gained an easy and certain victory, become an unresisting prey. *Resist then the De-*

vil, resist every tempter, at first; at the moment of solicitation; *and he will flee from you.*

4thly. *We are also taught by this passage of Scripture, that the ultimate safety of mankind, when they are tempted, lies in* GOD *only.*

Had *Eve* sought the protection of GOD, when she was assailed by the Adversary; she had never fallen. Had she remembered the character of GOD; she had never believed the declarations of the Tempter. Had she admitted no jealousy, no suspicion, of the divine Wisdom and goodness; she had, in all probability, kept her happy state.

The same dangers attend all her descendants. If we wish to overcome, or escape, temptations; it is indispensable, that we remember the presence, and acknowledge the character, of GOD; that we distrust in no degree his sincerity or kindness; and that we go directly to him for the succour, which we need. The closing petition in the prayer, taught by Christ to his disciples, is, *Lead us not into temptation: but deliver us from evil:* that is, *Suffer us not to be led into temptation; but, should this danger betide us at any time, deliver us from the evil to which we shall be then exposed.* Of six petitions only, of which this prayer consists; a prayer taught by him, who knew all the dangers and necessities of man; this is one. So necessary did he determine this assistance and guardianship to be; and so necessary our continual prayer, that it might be afforded.

In the first temptation, we see the doctrine strongly illustrated. Here no prayer ascended for aid. Here, therefore, no aid was given; and here, left to themselves, the miserable victims were of course destroyed. Let us, then, learn wisdom, both from their example and their end. Let us avoid the one, that we may escape the other. For protection from tempters, and temptations, both within us and without us, let our prayers unceasingly rise with fervent repetition. Especially, when the Serpent approaches, when the charm is about to begin; and when his mouth is ready to open and swallow us up, let our cries for help ascend to Heaven; that He, who is swift to hear, and always prepared to pity and relieve, may mercifully extend his arm, and snatch us from the jaws of destruction.

SERMON XXVIII.

PROVIDENCE.—THE SENTENCE PRONOUNCED ON MAN.

GENESIS iii. 14—19.—*And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field: upon thy belly shalt thou go; and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception: in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life: Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*

IN my last discourse, I considered at length *the temptation of our first parents, and their consequent fall from holiness, and from the favour of God.* The next subject, which, in a system of theology, invites our attention, is *the sentence which followed their transgression.*

This sentence is contained in the Text, and naturally divides itself, for our consideration, into *three parts:*

I. *The Sentence pronounced on the Tempter:*

II. *That pronounced on the Woman:* and,

III. *That pronounced on the Man.*

The order, in which this subject is exhibited to us, is the same which existed in the Temptation itself, and in the transgression also. The Serpent first sinned in tempting the Woman; the Woman sinned next, in yielding to his solicitations, and eating the forbidden fruit; and the Man last, in yielding to the solicitations of the Woman.

On the sentence, as here pronounced, it will be proper to remark, generally, that it is not a mere repetition of the words of the Law. Nor is it to be considered, as in fact involving the whole of the sentence, contained in the law. That sentence seems to have been left by God as it was originally denounced; and nothing more to have been now intended as a threatening, except to disclose to our first parents various evils, attendant on the state of guilt and degradation, to which they had reduced themselves, and to remind them of the mortal condition, in which they were now finally fixed. On the Serpent, indeed, a sentence new, and before undisclosed, was declared. The evils, which he was to suffer in consequence of this sin, were announced: while in the same

threatening was included, also a promise of great and singular benefits to those, whom he had most wickedly seduced.

The original threatening of the Law, or Covenant, under which our first parents were placed, involved all the evils, which they and their posterity were ever to suffer. The sentence, now passed on the transgressors, unfolded, particularly, several distresses, which they were hereafter to experience under this original threatening; and, at the same time, furnished them with consolations of high importance.

I. *The Sentence, passed on the Serpent, claims a two-fold consideration: in its literal meaning, and in its principal meaning.*

In the literal meaning of this denunciation, the Serpent *is cursed beyond all other beasts*, is doomed *to creep on the ground, and to eat dust all the days of his life.* Perpetual war, it is declared, shall exist between *his seed and that of the Woman;* in which *he shall bruise the heel* of his adversary; while his adversary *shall bruise his head.*

This, which I have chosen to call *the literal meaning of the sentence*, is, I acknowledge, rather *an application of it to the literal serpent.* The language, in which it is explained, is, I think, plainly figurative; and involves, generally, a state of peculiar degradation and suffering. It has been supposed, and I apprehend justly, that the original condition of the Serpent, as an animal, was superior and distinguished. Ancient opinions considered the serpent as winged, beautiful and privileged, above other animals. If these opinions be allowed to be just; it will be easily seen, that the degradation was remarkable, and altogether calculated to convince our first parents of the miserable tendency and influence of transgression. In every view, the condition specified, is a condition deeply degraded, and suited, obviously, to show the proper effect of sin on all the instruments, by which it was accomplished. Whatever the serpent lost, as well as whatever he suffered, was an infliction, properly evincing the hatred of God to every thing, concerned in the seduction of mankind; and to show to their progenitors, in immediate consequence, both the evil of which they had been guilty, and the certainty of their future punishment.

The enmity, which was announced, and which has existed between the seed of the woman generally, that is, mankind, and the seed of the Serpent, has been a source of innumerable evils to the Serpent. Animals of this kind have ever been peculiarly hated and hunted, peculiarly attacked and destroyed, from the beginning. Even the harmless ones do not escape. A war of extermination has plainly been declared against them, and carried on through all generations with unrelaxing and unceasing animosity. In consequence of this hostility, millions of them have probably perished, which otherwise might have continued through the date, allotted by Providence to their being. In the mean time, not a small number of the human race have fallen victims to the enmity of these

venomous beings; and have usually been wounded in every part of the Body, mentioned in this prediction.

The principal meaning of this sentence, or its application to the allegorical Serpent, the real Tempter, is, however, of infinitely more importance, and has a totally superior claim to our attention.

The Tempter and the Woman were, in the transgression, united together as rebels against their Creator. In the eye of the Tempter, this union was begun, only to be strengthened, and perpetuated. *He* had once sinned and was finally rejected by God. He, therefore, naturally, and in a sense necessarily, concluded, that rebellious man would be rejected also. No event had hitherto happened in the Universe, which, to the view of a created being, rendered it possible for a rebel against his Maker to be restored. Satan, therefore, of necessity concluded, that sinning man would never be restored; and that God, who had created man holy, and destined him to endless enjoyment, would be wholly disappointed of his own favourite designs. At the same time, he confidently saw the whole race added to his own kingdom, and the regions of sin and misery enlarged, and peopled, by the inhabitants of another ruined world.

But he now, for the first time, was solemnly informed, that a part, at least, of his expectations would perish. Man, he was here told, would on the one hand, be still his enemy, throughout succeeding ages; and himself, on the other, be made to suffer new and unknown, yet very alarming, evils, from a descendant, or descendants, of this very woman, whom he had beguiled into sin. *His head*, the chief, the vital, the percipient, part of himself, *was to be bruised*, or crushed, by some one, or other, of the progeny of those, whom he had ensnared. That he understood the real and full import of this threatening, cannot be supposed; but it is obvious, that he could not but perceive some very great and alarming punishment to be in store for his new and flagrant guilt. Thus all his *hopes*, like those of every *hypocrite*, were blasted in a moment; and were changed into that painful suspense, and constant alarm, which are always more dreadful than any misery, except final and eternal wo.

From the actual fulfilment of this prediction, and the comments of the Scriptural writers on the threatening contained in it, we are able to determine its full import with precision and certainty. The *seed of the Woman*, we know, was the *Lord Jesus Christ;* the Son of God, and the Redeemer of mankind. We are expressly taught, that he, although by the instigation of the original Tempter nailed to the Cross and *bruised* thus in *his heel*, his inferior part, his flesh, yet *triumphed and made an open show of principalities and powers* in his Crucifixion, and thoroughly *led captivity captive*, after he had effectually spoiled them of all their glory. In this great event, he not only vanquished *Death, but destroyed also him that had the power of Death; that is, the Devil.*

In this great event, he disappointed, and ruined, all the hopes

and designs of this proud and malicious spirit. His future lot he rendered far more shameful and wretched than before; lowered his pride for ever in the dust; turned his malevolence backward on himself; mortified his envy anew, and inexpressibly; and made the race, whom he had seduced, the instruments of completing his degradation, and ruin.

From Man, that is, from penitent, returning, and reformed man, this divine person *took away the sting of* the threatened *Death;* and chiefly, the Death itself, which was threatened. The grave he opened anew, and forced it to surrender its captives to himself. For all those of this numerous race, who are willing to confide in him as their Redeemer, he opened the gates of immortality; of a new and far more glorious immortality than that which they had lost. He purchased for them the sanctification of the Soul, the forgiveness of their sins, and *an inheritance undefiled* and *eternal* among the very Angels, to whose rank and character *Eve*, by eating the forbidden fruit, expected to arise. *They* indeed, in a manner, however, far different from that which was in the Tempter's thoughts, *will become as Gods*, or Angels; as the same Saviour has informed us; and will, together with them, receive felicity in a *Body*, *fashioned like unto his glorious Body*, and inconceivably superior to the refined dust which composed the forms of our first parents. In a state, perfectly sanctified and cleansed, they will enjoy a happiness, ennobled and expanded beyond all that heaven itself imagined, before the Mediation of the Son of God; a happiness, suited to reward his infinitely meritorious obedience in the work of Redemption. Thus the sum of happiness to the universe, will be undoubtedly increased, and to an immense extent, by the very means which this haughty, malignant Spirit employed for its destruction.

The Character, the station, the residence, the employments, the honour, and the happiness, of Man will be wonderfully exalted; the exhibitions of the divine glory will be supremely enhanced; and the Mercy of God, before unknown and unimagined, will be displayed with infinite and eternal splendour. God, in the new, peculiar, and most endearing relations of *Father*, *Redeemer*, and *Sanctifier*, far more intimate and affecting than those of *Creator*, and *Ruler*, will be more nearly united to his Intelligent creatures; and will be seen in more venerable and lovely exhibitions of his supreme excellence: while the themes of contemplation, gratitude, and praise, will be far more noble and interesting than could have been proper or possible, had not our first Parents lost their primitive station and happiness. Thus the Providence of God will wear a new and more glorious aspect; the divine kingdom assume a splendour and importance before unknown; and the Universe become a different, and incomparably more exalted scene of being.

In the mean time, the Tempter himself, at the close of this

earthly system, when all his wickedness shall have been acted, and all his wiles exhausted, will together with his debased and wretched companions, be consigned to *everlasting chains*, to total disappointment, to extreme humiliation, to eternal darkness, and to wo and despair, endless and inexpressible.

II. *The sentence pronounced on the Woman, next demands our attention.*

This consisted of *two parts: The pain and sorrow, which were to attend her in bearing and bringing forth children; and her subjection to her husband.* Neither of these would have had any being, had she resisted the temptation. She would have been a mother; but without pain and anguish: and she would have been a wife; but without any humiliating inferiority to her husband.

Now her state in both respects was entirely changed. Her life became *full of sorrow, and* largely *acquainted with grief;* and a great proportion of all her sufferings were to arise from these peculiar sources.

III. *The sentence on the Man is the last proposed subject of consideration.*

This consists of four distincts parts: *Toil, Sorrow, Humiliation,* and *Death.*

In the original state of Man, he laboured, but without toil. The Earth brought forth its fruits spontaneously, and abundantly; and supplied him with food, without any necessary care or exertions of his own. He was formed to industry, that he might be useful, and of course dignified and virtuous; and not merely that he might eat. His faculties, also, were firm, and undecaying, unsusceptible of weariness, and incapable of suffering. His labour was, therefore, voluntary and delightful; a privilege, and not a calamity. The sources of sorrow, also, were not then opened; and man had not learned to drink of its bitter streams. Fear, scorn, disease, bereavement, and all the moral causes of distress, were not yet appendages of this new world. Intemperance, sloth, impurity, falsehood, treachery, broken friendship, and iron-handed oppression, together with a long train of their miserable companions, were yet strangers to Man.

His station, as well as his character, was, in the mean time, noble and dignified. Angels did not disdain to own, and converse with him, as their friend and fellow-servant. All his views, pursuits, wishes, and employments, were refined and elevated; and were suited to the immortal life, and unspotted holiness, in which he was created.

Death, the offspring of Sin, had hitherto been an entire stranger to the great kingdom of God. All his creatures, and Man as truly as any of them, were possessed of life literally endless; and looked forward through the perpetual succession of ages without anxiety, and without fear.

In all these great particulars, Man was now destined to a total

change of being. He was condemned to hard and painful toil; to a course of life, in which a great proportion of the changes were merely varieties of suffering; to a degradation from all his honours and hopes; to a state of deep humiliation; and to Death as the end of his earthly being, accompanied with a train of the most affecting distresses and horrors. In this toil, these afflictions, this degradation, and this melancholy end, both sexes shared in most respects alike. Both were henceforth sinful; both were degraded; both were unhappy; both were mortal.

A question of no small importance in Theology, and often canvassed by Divines, as well as other Christians, will very naturally be asked, in this place; viz. *What was the extent of the curse, or original penalty, threatened in the Covenant made with Adam?*

That *temporal death* was threatened in this sentence, will not be questioned. In my own opinion, *Spiritual Death, and Eternal Death*, were also included.

That Eternal death constituted a part of this sentence, appears to me evident, because in the

1st. place, *Adam was plainly threatened with the loss of immortal life.*

Whatever else was contained in the threatening, this must be allowed to be a part of it. It follows, therefore, that either *Eternal death was threatened;* or *Annihilation;* or *temporal death, followed by eternal happiness.* The last will not be pretended. The second, viz. Annihilation, could not be threatened, because it was certainly no part of the design of God in the creation of Man. It seems evident, therefore, that the first is the true and only scheme of this part of the Scriptures, because these three are the only possible interpretations of the passage.

2dly. *In the sentence, a direct promise is made of the redemption of Christ; as the remedy for the curse, which is here denounced.*

But the redemption of Christ was not a remedy for that part of the curse, which denounced temporal death, as the reward of the apostacy. Men still die; *Adam* died; notwithstanding the redemption of Christ. The remedy, therefore, mentioned in the sentence, did not refer to any thing contained in it, if temporal death was all which it contained. On the contrary, it referred to something, of which *Adam* had heard, and at the time, knew nothing. Yet it is plain, that both he and his wife, in some good measure, knew the import of the remedy: for *he*, immediately after the sentence was pronounced, *called his Wife Eve*, or *Chavoh, because she was the Mother of all living;* that is, of all, who should live for ever, by means of *the seed of the Woman:* and *she*, at the birth of *Cain*, says, *I have gotten a Man, the Lord;* that is, the promised Lord, or seed, who was *to bruise the Serpent's head.* As, then, they knew what was meant by the remedy; so I think it clear, that they knew what the curse intended; and this, according to the view of the subject here presented, can be no other than eternal death.

That they understood, in some good measure, the meaning of both the remedy and the curse, is also evident from the fact, that they became penitents, and were accepted of God. There can be no repentance, where there is no hope of acceptance. Despair, here, is the only predominant emotion; and with despair, repentance cannot, in the physical sense, co-exist. Without an atonement repentance cannot be accepted. As an atonement was here promised, I cannot see how the repentance of our first parents could be accepted, or offered, unless with a direct reference, in their minds, to that atonement, as the ground of their acceptance.

3dly. *The Apostle Paul appears to me to have settled this point, in the fifth Chapter of his Epistle to the Romans.**

As I cannot comment, at this time, on the passage at large; I shall refer you only to a single verse, which appears to me, in this respect, a summary of the whole. In verse sixteenth, he says, *And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation; but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.* The judgment, here mentioned, is, unquestionably, the judgment originally passed on *the one that sinned;* viz. *Adam*, and, subsequently, on all others, who have sinned after him. This is said to have been unto condemnation; a condemnation, from which we are delivered by the justification specified, and styled, in the next verse but one, *the justification of life.* By this justification we are delivered from eternal death. Of course, this is the death, to which *we*, and *Adam* before us, were condemned by the judgment mentioned in this passage.

4thly. *The death, which rewards sin, in fact, and which would have rewarded the sin of Adam, if* CHRIST *had not become a Mediator, and he a penitent, is eternal death.*

The true import of the threatening is, I think, certainly learned from *its execution.* But this is an infliction of eternal death. The consequence is obvious and irresistible.

I do not, indeed, suppose our first parents to have been distinctly possessed of the exact meaning of the sentence. I consider them as only informed of the general import; and as being taught, that they were to suffer, if disobedient, the perpetual loss of the favour and blessing of God, and to undergo the manifestations of his anger throughout their future existence. To this they were able to come as near in their views as they could, to adequate conceptions of temporal death.

That spiritual death was also threatened in this sentence, appears to me sufficiently evident for the reasons, to be alleged, after I shall have mentioned the *chief* objection, which, so far as I am informed, has been made to this doctrine. It is this: *Spiritual Death is the state which Sinners, as such, love;* the prime object of their

* See from verse 12 to the end.

choice; and what especially constitutes them sinners. To this I answer,

1st. *Spiritual Death ought, in relation to this question, to be considered as threatened to Adam, and not as threatened to those who were already sinners.*

Spiritual Death, or habitual and immoveable sin, in the view of *Adam*, a holy, spotless being, and hating wholly every sin, might, I think, be regarded, not only as not chosen, or loved, by him, but as an object of supreme dread and horror. Let it be, for a moment only, considered, how such a being must feel, under a sense of losing his holy character for ever, and of being confirmed, beyond recall, in a perpetual hatred of God, and a perpetual love and practice of sin; and I believe all serious persons will agree, that this debased, odious, and contemptible character must appear to him an evil literally infinite. To sin, *once*, was to him an object of horror; but to be consigned for that sin to *habitual and eternal rebellion and iniquity*, and to become thus for ever hateful, vile, and despicable, must be, on the one hand, a loss; and on the other, a suffering, dreadful beyond all conception, except that of experience. It was, therefore, capable of being the subject of threatening, or penalty; and that to any supposable degree.

2dly. *Spiritual Death is plainly the chief evil, which is, or perhaps can be, suffered by guilty beings.*

Perpetual and habitual sin, or that depraved state of soul, which operates only in sinful actions, is an evil, greater, if considered only as mere suffering, than, perhaps, all others.

It is, in the first instance, the source of all the opposition, or rather is itself all the opposition, of the Soul to God; the alienation from God; consciousness of his disapprobation and wrath; fear of his vengeance; and that miserable murmuring and repining against his government and dispensations, which is felt by every sinful being.

It is, also, the source of the hatred, malevolence, envy, revenge, deceit, violence, and injustice, which so universally and dreadfully distress, and destroy, Intelligent creatures, in the present world; and in every world, where these dispositions prevail. It also cuts up by the roots, all inclination in rational beings to befriend each other; and prompts them to become, as much as possible, the means of each other's misery.

Finally; the several emotions of the soul, in this state, are in themselves misery. This will readily be acknowledged concerning many of these emotions. It is true of them universally. If we suppose them to be increased to a given degree, and to rage without gratification, nothing more is, or can be, necessary to complete the misery of a creature. Is not envy alone sufficient to make wretchedness complete? Is not murmuring against God? Is not the consciousness of being perfectly, and eternally, hateful and despicable? Is not any vehement and ungratified desire; if, at the

same time, that desire is felt to be unlawful, base, and vile? Consider all such affections as invariable and endless; and, what they are clearly known to be, most unworthy and abominable; and so inwrought into the Soul, that they cannot be separated from it, but by annihilation; and, I think, you will acknowledge readily, that a more perfect curse cannot be named.

3dly. *The things which, in various places, are said in the Scriptures, concerning the state of damnation, in which this penalty is actually inflicted, seem fully to imply, that spiritual Death is a part of the curse.*

In the first Chapter of Proverbs, Wisdom, that is, Christ, in denouncing the same curse against the impenitent, particularly under the Gospel, closes the threatenings with this remarkable declaration: *Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.*

In this passage, the curse may be said to be repeated, and explained: and here, one part of the explanation is, that the impenitent *shall be filled with their devices.* The devices of a man are his aims, pursuits, and plans, in which his affections are all exerted. With these, and all of them, the very pursuits and plans, which are their own; that is, which have in this life been their own; Christ declares, the impenitent shall not only be afflicted, but *filled.* Thus also, *Solomon* says, *The Backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways; and the good man from himself;* that is, from his own mind, affections and character; from the remembrance of what he was, and the consciousness of what he is; the wicked and the good man shall either suffer or enjoy, hereafter, in an eminent manner.

Again; Wisdom, or Christ, addressing himself to sinners, in the eighth Chapter, says, *All they that hate me, love Death.* It can hardly be said, that Sinners love either temporal or eternal Death, considered as mere suffering; but that they love spiritual death is unquestionable. But the Death, here loved, is, I think, clearly the Death beyond the grave.

The fact is also undoubted, that the damned are not only unhappy, but wicked. Nor will it be denied, that they are thus *judicially;* that they are given over by God to this character in the same manner, as persons are judicially given up to blindness, hardness of heart, and final ruin, in the present world. It will also, I presume, be readily conceded, that their misery will, in a great measure, arise from their own sinful affections and pursuits, and those of their companions in wo. These facts appear to be a comment on the curse of the Law, and to explain to us in this particular its true import.

REMARKS.

1st. *This subject affords strong proof of the divine Origin of the Scriptures.*

The manner, in which the declarations in this sentence have

been already fulfilled, is certainly a very interesting testimony to the truth of the history, of which it is a part; a history of vast comprehension, and involving a great proportion of all the things contained in the Bible; and a history probably more objected to by Infidels than any other found in Revelation.

Of the fulfilment of *the sentence on the Serpent, literally understood*, there cannot be a question. A hostility, totally singular, has always existed between him and mankind; and a war has always been carried on with peculiar enmity. To destroy this animal, has been a settled pursuit in the heart of man, through every age and every country. The manner, in which this destruction has been accomplished, has also been continually that, which is here predicted; and the extent of the destruction has been in a sense without bounds. It has not been originated by a spirit of self-defence, but of hatred. It has been a war of the kind, which the Romans describe as carried on *ad internecionem;* or to the final destruction of one or the other of the combatants. The cause of this will in vain be sought for in conviction and contrivance. Serpents are certainly far less mischievous to mankind than many other animals, which, yet, are not thus hunted and destroyed. Their shape is such, and their whole appearance, as in other cases is regarded not only without disgust, but with pleasure. Yet the sight of a serpent is instantly productive of a dread, a horror, a chill, totally singular, and extending to all the race of *Adam*. An enmity innate and irremoveable exists between us and them, felt even at the mention of the name, and strongly and proverbially expressed in a great variety of forms. Even those serpents which are known to be harmless, are, like the rest, hated in the same manner, seen with the same horror, and killed with the same eagerness. How striking an exhibition is this of the reality of the sentence! How strong a proof, from fact, of the truth of the history!

Of the fulfilment of this sentence *on the Serpent, figuratively considered*, we have no knowledge, except from the Scriptures themselves. In them, as I have already shown, we have a full account of the complete and wonderful accomplishment of it in the Redemption of Man. In this account, although contained in the Scriptures, we are presented with high evidence of their divinity. It is not conceivable, it is not possible, that *Moses*, unless inspired, should have written this prediction, with even a conjecture, that it would afterwards be thus fulfilled. Nor is it much more consistent with possibility, that the Apostles should have contrived the subsequent story so, as thus wonderfully to have accorded with this singular prophecy. The fulfilment is here as complete as it is wonderful; and, although dependent on myriads of events, these all appear in one perfect system, tending always to this end, and in this end consummating the scheme of the prophecy. He, who can believe these things to have been accidental, or to have

been contrived by mere human ingenuity, must have a peculiar facility of believing at his pleasure; and must be wholly freed from the shackles of evidence, whether certain or probable.

Nor is the fulfilment of *the sentence on the Woman* less remarkable. In all ages, countries, and climates, of the world, Women have been distinguished, from every species of animals, by the pains and sorrows, which they have experienced in bearing, and bringing forth, their offspring; a striking proof, that the human race have forfeited, and lost their original supremacy over the inferior inhabitants of the Earth. A great part of all the dangers and sufferings of the tender and delicate sex, are plainly derived from this source. No experience, no watchful observation, no medical skill, however laboriously exerted, and however long continued, have been sufficient to lessen this great portion of human wo, or materially to prevent the entire fulfilment of the sentence, pronounced on the general mother of mankind. The same sorrow, pain, and fear, still remain; the same dangers still betide; the same diseases still ravage; and Death, in the same humiliating and distressing forms, and in the same proportion and number of instances, still triumphs over one half of our species; in exact accordance with the threatening of the Text.

Nor has the other part of the prediction been less wonderfully, or much less affectingly, accomplished. Throughout all savage nations, (and savage nations have constituted a great part of mankind, in every age of the world, with which we are acquainted) women have been reduced to extreme humiliation, dependence, and distress, by the stronger sex. Brutal strength and agility are the only attributes valued by savages; and women being inferior to men, in these attributes, have, by savages, been universally depressed. Of course, they have been destined, and compelled, to all those employments, which men disliked, or contemned. The very feebleness of frame, which, in the view of Men, rendered them inferior to themselves, might, one would think, naturally excuse them from the fatigue and hardship of severe labour, and plead for them an exemption from business, to which their strength was totally unequal. Still it has pleaded in vain. They have been made mere drudges, and doomed to the most toilsome, distressing, and servile offices, for the mere convenience of men. Men, when not roused to the pleasures and glories of hunting and war, have, in the savage life, spent their time in sloth, in sleep, and in diversion; while women have been forced to plant, and gather their corn; to make their utensils; and to perform, besides, all the domestic business. They have also been obliged to bear most of the burdens, and to carry the children, while infants, in their various journeys.

All the savages, of the several parts of the globe, have pursued one course of life, in this respect. In some nations, women have been condemned to such wretchedness, in consequence of their

subjection, as to expose their female children to destruction, in order to prevent them from suffering the same misery with themselves; esteeming an untimely and violent death a happier lot than life, when doomed to suffer such dreadful oppression.

In all the *Mohammedan* nations, also, and throughout the vast empires of *Hindostan* and *China*, women have suffered, in a manner not much less humiliating. In Mohammedan countries, they are bought and sold like cattle; are considered as mere property; are imprisoned, as they are in *China* also, for life; and are regarded, universally, and only, as instruments of amusement, and pleasure, by their brutal masters.

Christianity has indeed, in a great measure, in this as well as in other respects, reversed the curse. In 1 Tim. ii. xv. the Apostle, speaking of women, says, *Nevertheless she shall be saved in* (that is, by means of) *child-bearing, if they continue in faith, and charity, and holiness, with sobriety.* I apprehend the true meaning of this passage to be, that child-bearing shall eminently prove the means of salvation to the sex, through the influence of that system of Christianity, which was intended to be the general reversion of the curse. According to this declaration of the Apostle, we actually see that the danger and distress, to which women are peculiarly exposed, are the means of their piety and salvation. Women are usually pious, in far greater numbers, than men. The late President *Edwards*, of *Nassau Hall*, considered the proportion, within the limits of his information, as at least two to one; and various other Divines, of great knowledge in the religion of mankind, have concurred with him in this opinion. This interesting fact is probably owing, chiefly, if not wholly, to the danger, sorrow, and death, to which the sex are especially exposed; and which, always before their eyes, operate as solemn, and effectual monitions of their speedy departure to the eternal world. In this way they are usually more sober-minded, more attentive to spiritual and eternal things, and more disposed to give them their due influence, than men; and, thus far oftener become the subjects of piety, and the heirs of endless life.

In Christian countries, also, Women have risen from the miserable state of humiliation and servitude, which I have described, to their proper importance and dignity. In such countries, to a great extent, they are educated, informed, refined, and elevated to the character of respectable, rational, and moral beings. The character which they sustain, and the treatment to which they are entitled, in the Gospel, are highly becoming its refined and noble character. Refined and elegant tenderness was unknown, until it was made a part of the revealed system. There it is enjoined in the strongest of all terms, and by the noblest of all allusions. *Husbands love your wives, even as Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it*, is the affecting language of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, on this interesting subject; and such language, as was

never used by any other man. Accordingly, in Christian nations, and in Christian nations only, are women restored to the blessings, which, among the rest of mankind, they have lost; and in many of them, are as far restored to them, as, in so imperfect a state of being, can be rationally expected.

The sentence, passed on the man, is also fulfilled in the same perfect manner.

We see *the ground cursed, and bringing forth thorns and briars*, instead of the living fruits of Paradise. We see man destined to labour for his bread, and to *eat* that *bread in the sweat of his brow.*

We see him, also, *of few days and full of trouble.* Fears of ten thousand dangers and distresses haunt him every day, and on every side; pain and disease derived from Earth, Air, and Ocean, from his birth and his food, his exercise, and his rest; and affecting every nerve, and every pore; sorrow for every disappointment of his hopes, and for every frail and vanishing enjoyment which he attains, and extending through all the days of his life; embitter their whole progress, and render his continuance in this world often so undesirable, that, with *Job*, he is ever ready to cry out, *I would not live always.*

Nor do we see him less fallen in his character, station, employments, happiness, and universal condition. Of a prince, the lord of a world, he is become a drudge, a poor, dependent wretch; dependent on every person and thing around him; and in the evils which betide, and those which threaten him, daily, is reduced far below the condition of the brutes. In the happiest countries of the world, how clearly is this the state of man! How much more strikingly in those, which are scorched with heat, or stiffened with frost, around the year; in those, which are cursed with drought and sterility; and in those, which are haunted by the pestilence, and all its dismal attendants? This part of the sentence is, however, less commonly regarded, as a strong exhibition of the truth of this history, than the others: I think without propriety or justice. The real reason undoubtedly is, that we consider the present condition of man as his only condition, and are reluctant to admit, that he was ever placed in any other. Of this, however, there is no evidence, and no substantial probability. The tradition of all ancient nations teaches directly the contrary doctrine, and amply supports the history of *Moses*. Nor is it reasonable to believe, that man came from the hands of God the same frail, miserable being, which we now behold him; or the world, that mass of inclemency, barrenness, and confusion, which we see in its present state. A paradise is, to the first view of the mind, the proper state of a world; and unspotted virtue and happiness, the proper state of rational beings, as they come from the hands of the Creator. All things betoken a world, and a race of inhabitants, in ruins; and such has been the decision of all the ancient nations: a decision, unquestionably derived by tradition from the real facts.

In this view, every thing, which respects man, is a lively fulfilment of the prediction in the text: a fulfilment exact and complete; and exhibiting, in the strongest manner, the truth of the history in which it is contained.

2dly. *In this story is presented to us a glorious manifestation of the Mercy of God.*

Before God proceeded to utter the sentence of condemnation on the man and woman, and while he was declaring the punishment of the Tempter, he disclosed the future designs of Redeeming and Forgiving Love.

The Lord Jesus Christ was the person, who here passed sentence on these offenders. As *the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son; as no man hath seen God, the Father, at any time, nor can see him and live;* it is certain that God, as here spoken of, was no other than the Second Person of the Trinity; the Redeemer of Mankind. This divine Person even now began the work of Redemption, in the very moment, when the first objects of it first existed; thus early showing, that *the Lord is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.*

What a divinely amiable character does the Redeemer here exhibit! The first opportunity, the first moment of that opportunity, he seizes, to make known to apostate man his design to *save his people from their sins.* As if he feared, that the sentence would overwhelm the poor, unhappy culprits, he prepared them to support the terms of it, by publishing their recovery before he declared their condemnation and ruin.

Adam and *Eve* appear to have clearly understood, that they and theirs, although under sentence of Death, were even, by this sentence, to find life. As soon as the denunciation is made; *Adam*, who in the paradisiacal state had called his wife *Woman*, even when immortal life was secured to them, now, as I have before observed, called her *Eve;* which signifies *living*, or *communicating life;* and adds this reason for the name; *because she was the mother of all the living;* that is, of all, who, according to the gracious declarations of this sentence, were to be restored to immortal life. *Eve* herself, also, on the birth of her first son, expresses her full faith in the prediction, when, after naming him *Cain*, she says, as has been already observed, "I have gotten *a Man, the Lord;*" not *from the Lord*, as in our translation; but *a Man*, who is *the Lord; the seed of the Woman, who is to bruise the serpent's head.* Thus it is evident, that they well understood the prediction, and realized the consolation, which it conveyed.

What instance of divine Mercy can be conceived of, more tender, more condescending, more like Redeeming Love, than this? How much does the Saviour of mankind appear like himself! How early he began *to seek, and to save, that which was lost!* He perfectly knew, that he himself was to die on the Cross, to accom-

plish this Redemption; yet he utters the glad tidings to mankind, with eagerness and haste; as if impatient to make known to them the salvation, which he was to purchase with his blood.

As when he came in sight of *Jerusalem*, at the mount of Olives, *he wept over* that guilty, ruined *city;* so here he may be naturally considered as taking a solemn and compassionate view of a ruined World, and all the lost myriads of the race of *Adam;* as weeping over their destruction; and as saying, not, *How often would I gather*, but, *I will gather you*, fallen and perishing sinners, *as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings. Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy. For unto you shall be born a Saviour, even Christ the Lord. Beautiful on the mountains shall he come, bringing good tidings, publishing Peace, bringing good tidings of good, publishing Salvation, and saying unto Zion, Thy God reigneth*, Lost as ye are, O ye children of Adam, *unto you I call; I rejoice in the habitable parts of the Earth, and my delights are still with the sons of men. Glory, still, shall be to God in the highest, and on Earth peace, and good-will towards men. Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O Earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains; for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted. The heavens shall drop down from above, and the skies shall pour down Righteousness; the Earth also shall open, and bring forth Salvation.*

SERMON XXIX.

UNIVERSALITY OF SIN PROVED FROM REVELATION AND FROM FACTS.

ROMANS v. 12.—*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.*

IN the three preceding discourses, I have considered *the Trial, Temptation, Apostacy, and Sentence, of our first parents.* The next subject in a Theological system, is *the Effect of the Apostacy on their descendants.* The consideration of this subject I shall, therefore, begin in the following discourse.

In the Text, independently of all comments and criticisms, *three things are directly asserted.*

I. *That by one Man Sin entered the world:*

II. *That in consequence of this event all men have sinned:*

III. *That Death, as the consequence of sin, hath passed upon all men.*

Concerning the last of these assertions there is no debate. The two first, therefore, will occupy the present discussion; and these, for the sake of convenience, I shall reduce to the single, following proposition:

That in consequence of the Apostacy of Adam, All Men have sinned.

Before I enter on the examination of this doctrine, I shall premise a few observations, which, I hope, will, in some degree, be useful towards accomplishing the general design, proposed in this sermon.

Perhaps no doctrine is more reluctantly received by the human mind, than that, which I have just now stated. Accordingly, it has been strenuously contended against, and resolutely rejected, not only by Infidels, but by a considerable part of the Christian world, ever since it became a topic of public debate. Nor, when we remember the present character of man, can we think it strange, that such opposition should exist. The doctrine in question, more than any other, humbles the pride, awakens the fears, and lessens the happiness, of every child of *Adam.* A common interest, therefore, naturally summons all men to oppose it; and not unfrequently bears down the evidence, by which it is supported. Christians feel this interest as truly as other men; and under the influence of this feeling resist, or forget, the proof of the doctrine. At the same time, the doctrine itself, it must be acknowledged, is connected with many things very mysterious, and very perplexing. These, adding embarrassment to reluctance, have, in many instances, persuaded men to refuse the doctrine, in spite of the testimony of Experience and Revelation. For myself, I readily confess, that if

I saw any mode of avoiding the evidence by which it is established, I would certainly reject it also.

But it can never be wise, it can never be vindicable, to deny truth, or reject evidence. If the doctrine be true; it is our interest to know it: if it be clearly evinced; it is our duty to receive it; and that, however reluctant *we* may be, and however mysterious *the doctrine*. To every sober man this duty will appear of high importance, and indispensable obligation, if he finds, that God has taught him this doctrine, as one of the truths, which he has been pleased to require mankind to believe. To the interest, always involved in the performance of our duty, he will find also, superadded, the solemn concern of coming to the knowledge of his own guilt and danger, that he may be induced to avail himself of the only means of pardon and safety. While he feels himself *whole*, he certainly can never suspect his *need of a physician*: while he is unaware of his guilt, he cannot be supposed ever to look to Christ for deliverance.

With these things in view, I hope, that every member of this audience will readily open his mind to the discussion of this subject, melancholy and painful as it is; whilst, in proof of the doctrine, I allege *the following arguments, derived partly from fact, and partly from Revelation.*

From Revelation I allege,

1st. *The Text, as decisive proof of this doctrine.*

This proof is *two-fold.* First, *the doctrine is directly asserted, All have sinned.* Lest there should be any doubt, whether an absolute universality is intended in this place, the Apostle has exhibited his intention in the most decisive manner: *So death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.* Here we are taught, that *all sin, who die.* As, therefore, every child of *Adam* dies; so, according to the sentence of the Apostle, every child of *Adam* is a sinner. Secondly, *the Apostle proves the doctrine by argument*, and in my view unanswerably. Death cannot be the reward, or allotment, of virtuous beings. It is plainly a punishment, and a dreadful one; and can of course be, in no possible sense, a testimony of the divine approbation. But the approbation of God is invariably given to obedience. If, then, all men were obedient only; not one of them could suffer death, or any other evil. Accordingly, *Adam*, while obedient, was assured of immortal life. In the same manner, also, *the Angels who kept their first estate*, are immortal, and happy.

But death befalls all the race of *Adam:* therefore every one is a sinner.

2dly. *After Adam had lost the image of God, we are informed, that he begat a son in his own likeness.*

The image of God, in which *Adam* was created, has been heretofore shown to be *divine knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. The likeness of Adam* is, by unquestionable analogy, *the*

moral character which he possessed after his apostacy. In this likeness *Seth* is said to have been begotten. That *Cain* was begotten in the same likeness will not be disputed. The same thing is indirectly, but decisively asserted also concerning *Abel:* for he is declared to have lived, and died, in faith, that is, in the future Redeemer. But Christ, as the Redeemer, could not have been an object of faith to *Abel*, had he not been a sinner; or, in other words, had he not borne the likeness of apostate *Adam*. But, if this was the nature of *the immediate children* of *Adam*, it cannot even be suspected, that it is not equally the nature of *his remoter progeny;* or that they do not all bear the likeness of their common parent. Not a shadow of reason can be given, why one law should have governed the birth and character of his immediate descendants, and another, the birth and character of the rest.

3dly. *St. Paul, in the three first chapters of the epistle to the Romans, has argued this point, at large, concerning both Jews and Gentiles.*

On this argument he himself is, undoubtedly, the best commentator; and his comment is given to us in the following terms: *What then? are we (Jews) better than they? (Gentiles) No, in no wise; for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

4thly. *The same Apostle declares, that by the works of law, no flesh shall be justified in the sight of God.*

But if sinless men, if even one sinless man, existed in this world, he could not fail to be justified by the works of law: for the law itself says, *He who doth these things*, that is, the things required in the law, *shall live by them.* As, therefore, *no flesh*, no child of *Adam, shall be justified by the works of law;* it follows irresistibly, that every one is sinful.

On the same purport is the declaration of Christ to *Nicodemus. Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* The only use, or effect, of the new birth is, that in it holiness is implanted in the mind. But if any man were sinless, he could not need regeneration, nor be regenerated. He would already perfectly possess that holiness, which is imperfectly communicated in regeneration; and, of course, would *see the kingdom of God* as certainly, and easily, at least, as those who possessed less holiness than himself.

In the like manner, *St. Paul* argues, 2 Cor. v. xiv. *For*, says he, *we thus judge; that if one died for all, then were all dead*, that is, *in trespasses and sins.*

To these Scriptural exhibitions on this subject I might add a vast multitude of others. In truth, no doctrine of the Scriptures is expressed in more numerous, or more various, forms; or in terms more direct, or less capable of misapprehension.

What the Scriptures declare in so pointed and ample a manner, Facts elucidate with such clearness and force, as to be, at least in my opinion, incapable of being rationally resisted.

1st. *The Laws of all nations are a strong proof, that the human character is universally sinful.*

Human laws are made, only to repress and restrain sin; are derived only from experience; and are forced upon mankind by iron-handed necessity. They exist in every country; and restrain sin of every kind, which human laws can affect, or human tribunals can prove, and punish. The penalties, by which they attempt this restraint, are various and dreadful; are the most efficacious, which experience can suggest, or ingenuity devise; and are changed continually, as they are found to fail of their effect, by the substitution of others, which promise greater success. Still they have always fallen short of their purpose. The propensity to evil in the heart of man, has defied all their force and terror; and boldly ventured on the forbidden perpetration, in the sight of the pillory and the prison, the gibbet and the rack. No ingenuity on the one hand, and no suffering on the other, has, in any country, been sufficient to overcome this propensity, and so far to change the character of man, as to exterminate even a single sin.

To this head ought to be referred all the means, furnished by law, of safety to our persons and our property: the bolts, bars, and locks, by which we endeavour to defend our houses and their contents, our persons and our families, especially in the night, against the inroads of theft and violence: the notes, bonds, and deeds, by which we endeavour to secure our contracts, prevent the mischiefs of fraud, and compel dishonesty to fulfil its engagements: the gaols and dungeons, the chains and galleys, by which we endeavour to confine villains, and prevent them from disturbing by their crimes the peace of society: the post, the pillory, and the gibbet, by which we punish some culprits, and labour to deter others from repeating their perpetrations. All these, and the like things, are gloomy and dreadful proofs of the corruption of the world, in which they exist. They exist wherever men are found, of sufficient capacity, and in proper circumstances, to attempt a regular opposition to crimes, a continued preservation of peace, and a general establishment of personal safety. The sinfulness, therefore, which they intend to resist, is equally universal. In a world of virtue they could have no place; because they could not be of any possible use: the spirit of the inhabitants supplying, infinitely better, the peace and safety, which they so imperfectly secure.

2dly. *The Religion of all nations is a forcible proof of the same doctrine.*

The Religion of every nation has been *expiatory;* that is, it has been so formed, as intentionally to make satisfaction for sin, and to obtain reconciliation with a God, acknowledged to be offended. Of this nature, obviously, are *sacrifices.* The victim was always

intended to be an offering for sin, and the means of regaining forfeited favour. The more valuable the victim, the more efficacious was supposed to be the atonement, and the more certain the favour solicited. Accordingly, when inferior offerings were found, or believed, to fail, human sacrifices were substituted for them; and these, not unfrequently, of the highest estimation: youths nobly born, possessed of eminent endowments, and educated in the manner, most advantageously fitted to ensure mental distinction. Sacrifices of this general nature were offered by all the ancient heathen nations, and have been offered by many still existing. In *Hindoostan*, they appear to be offered at the present time.

Nor did the other offerings of the Heathen speak any other language. The fragrance, the beauty, the costliness, the frequency, and the multitude, of these, were plainly intended to conciliate the good-will of the god, who was supplicated; a good-will confessedly estranged, but supposed to be capable of being acquired anew.

According to the same scheme, also, were formed their *prayers;* which either implicitly, or explicitly, acknowledged the sins of the suppliant, and besought the restoration of the favour, which he had forfeited.

On the same principle, tedious *pilgrimages*, consuming, at times, a length of years, and traversing no trifling part of the breadth of the globe, were undertaken, and executed. The burning heat, the parching drought, and the excessive perils, of an *Arabian* or a *Nubian* desert, were quietly, and even cheerfully, sustained by hosts of wanderers, who had voluntarily exiled themselves from their friends, families, and country, with the hope of obtaining the remission of sin, considered as absolutely necessary, and supposed to be unattainable by any means less dangerous and distressing.

Ablutions speak the same design in a manner still more direct and unequivocal. To wash away his guilt, the *Egyptian* plunged himself in the *Nile;* and the *Hindoo* in the *Ganges*. From these waters, invested by popular superstition with the transcendent power of removing moral pollution, each expected to come out cleansed from his turpitude, and entitled anew to the complacency of the god, whom he was conscious of having offended. On this ground, the holy streams were resorted to by immense multitudes with incredible eagerness and anxiety; and were supposed to furnish a certain passport to future blessings.

To ablution was added *Penance*, as very hopeful means of obtaining the same desirable object. This unnatural resort existed in a great variety of forms; all of them humiliating, forbidding, and dreadful. Hunger, thirst, the heat of summer, and the frost of winter, nakedness, weariness, extreme want, and excruciating pain, have been undergone by millions of the human race without a groan, a murmur, or a sigh, from an expectation, that this voluntary suffering would shelter the criminal from the demands of future justice. It ought to be remarked, that the length to which this

self-denial has often proceeded, shows in the strongest manner not only the reality, but the intense degree, of guilt, with which the subject of it supposed himself to be stained.

All these were regarded as essential duties of Religion, and as indispensably demanded of every man. In performing them, every man confessed, that he was stained with the common guilt, and that he needed an expiation.

3dly. *The same doctrine is proved by the Writings of all nations, among whom writings are found.*

The history both of nations and individuals, is professedly a true account of their actions and characters. It is also rarely written by men, who are not at least candid towards those, concerning whom they write; and often by those, who are strongly prejudiced in their favour: men of the same nation; or party; or for some other reason partially inclined towards the individual, or the cause, which is the subject of their history. There is also, in most historians, a strong, prevailing inclination to cover the defects, and crimes, of those, whose actions they record; lest by a full disclosure of them they should render the history less entertaining, than they wish, to their readers. From all these causes, History is often a mere panegyric; and almost always, perhaps always, a much more favourable account of the conduct of men, than truth would warrant. The history of the Bible, being dictated by Inspiration, presents its subjects more generally darkened, and deformed, in a great proportion of instances; both because it was designed to unfold the *moral characters* of men in an especial manner, and because it is true. Hence, we commonly suppose the people of *Israel* to have been more depraved than other nations. This, however, is an erroneous opinion; as any man, who reads the first Chapter of the Epistle to the *Romans*, will easily discern. Had Prophets written the history of the rest of mankind, there is but too much reason to believe, that nations and individuals, generally, who have been the subjects of history, would have presented features equally disgusting, and monstrous, with those of the *Israelites*.

But favourable as all these causes are to the human character, powerfully as they have influenced writers to present, and that with many adventitious ornaments, only the bright, and to conceal, as much as possible, the dark, side of man; History is still a satire upon our race, scarcely less severe than any of those, professedly, written under this name. Should we, contrary to all probability, or, in better language, to absolute certainty, acknowledge the portrait to be an exact, unflattering likeness; we must still be obliged to confess the whole aspect to be misshapen and monstrous; without symmetry, beauty, or loveliness. Man, as described by History, is undeniably, and always has been, an evil, odious being; disobedient and ungrateful to his Maker; unjust, insincere, and unkind, to his fellow Man; and far removed from the character,

which the Scriptures demand, which Conscience approves, or which, even in our opinion, God can be supposed to love.

With History, *moral and philosophical writings*, have abundantly concurred. I will here pass all those, which have been immediately directed to the point in question, and have either declared, or argued, it in form; their aid being unnecessary for the present purpose. Those which have been conducted with other designs, nay, those which have intentionally opposed this doctrine, have nevertheless served to establish it. This they have done in many ways; particularly by the feebleness of their arguments advanced in opposition to it; by the pains which they have taken to disguise human turpitude by fair names, flattering ascriptions, and false justifications; by the gross moral sentiments which they have abetted; and by the deformed dispositions, which they have thus disclosed to the public view. Their very confessions, also, of what they in vain attempt to deny, furnish no small evidence of its truth: while their efforts not unfrequently wear the appearance of a concerted design to carry a point, scarcely supposed to be tenable; of an artful and insidious struggle to gain converts, and achieve a victory; rather than of an honest endeavour to establish a truth, of which the author is sincerely convinced. Upon the whole, in spite of all the exertions, made to cover this humiliating truth, and hide from the perception of man an object so offensive, the fœtor still escapes; and forces itself upon the senses in a manner so disgusting, as to compel a conviction of its existence.

Poems, *Plays*, *Novels*, and *other books of entertainment*, written professedly only to amuse and please, are necessitated to unfold the same truth in a still clearer manner. All the characters, almost, are characters mixed with sin; and the few unmixed ones, which they have attempted, are perceived by mere taste, unaccompanied with intellectual examination, to be dull, lifeless, and unnatural. Accordingly, rational criticism has every where condemned them, as improperly introduced, because they have no originals in fact. The sentiments, also, thrown out in these productions, are evidential of the same truth. In innumerable forms they declare, and appeal to, the universal corruption of mankind, as the object, about which they are extensively occupied; and the only source, in a great multitude of instances, from which they are derived. Were not human nature corrupted; a great part of them could never have had either existence, or meaning.

4thly. *The Conversation of all men abundantly declares the same truth.*

All men continually ascribe sin to all men, except themselves; and few, very few, have ever dared to deny even themselves to be sinners. The best of mankind readily confess, and deeply lament, their own sins, in terms of the greatest humiliation and sorrow. *Paul* declares himself to be encompassed with a *body of* sin and *death*. *Jacob*, *Job*, *Moses*, *David*, *Hezekiah*, *Daniel*, *Jeremiah*, *Pe-*

ter, James, and John, all acknowledged their own guilt without hesitation, or concealment. Good men, in every succeeding age, have followed their steps, in this frankness and integrity, so suited to their general character, and have with a single voice declared their own share in the common corruption. Could this fact have taken place, if the corruption were not universal? If *Job, Daniel, Paul and John*, were not sinless, we must seek in vain for persons of this character among men: for no men have by their conduct ever proved themselves to approximate nearer to this enviable character. If the doctrine of this discourse be not true; on what principles shall this conduct be explained? Can it be supposed, that men, distinguished for their virtue, have thus violated their integrity by confessing guilt, with which they were not chargeable; and become gratuitously wicked, merely for the sake of persuading others, that they were wicked? Have men of the fairest reputation assumed a scandalous character, merely for the sake of acquiring that character? Nothing is more clear, than that men would never ascribe sin to themselves, and voluntarily pronounce themselves deformed and hateful; especially men of distinguished sincerity, and possessing the fairest means of escaping such an imputation; unless they were compelled to this ascription by the real state of the fact, and the irresistible conviction of their own consciences.

Another class of persons, however, at times deny themselves to be sinful, and employ various expedients to support themselves in this denial; such as labouring to prove, that they are mere machines, the subjects of no moral attributes, and utterly incapable of any moral action; and attempting to disprove all distinction between right and wrong. But this denial, instead of proving the authors of it to be sinless, is an unquestionable proof, that they are peculiarly sinful. Their *general* sinfulness of character is, in all instances, unanswerably evident from the general tenor of their conduct. Were they not the subjects of that blindness, which is the result of sin only, they could not fail to confess their true character; a character, to all with whom they have intercourse so obvious, that they never deceive any one by this denial, except themselves. Accordingly, no one gives credit to their assertions. On the contrary, all around them regard them as more sinful than other men, and as unanswerably proving their peculiar depravity by this very denial.

In the mean time, the conversation of mankind, proves the truth of the doctrine, with the same clear evidence, *in another manner*. All men ascribe sin to all other men. The sin either exists in those, to whom it is ascribed; or it does not. If it be acknowledged thus to exist; the debate is at an end. If it do not exist in those, to whom it is ascribed; the ascription itself, being a gross act of injustice, is sin in the ascriber. As all are concerned in making this ascription, all are certainly sinful; whether one or the

other side of this dilemma be chosen. Indeed, if our fellow-men were not too evidently sinful to admit of any debate, all men would regard such an ascription with horror and detestation. So palpable and malignant an act of injustice could not be tolerated for a moment. Ministers particularly, when preaching in a solemn and pungent manner on this subject, would be considered only as designing to slander and abuse their audiences; and, to say the least, would never be able to assemble a congregation a second time. Still, few, very few, of mankind pretend to be offended with them for the plainest exhibitions of this subject. On the contrary, hardly any sermons are more popular, or better received, than those, which portray the human character as deformed, guilty, and odious; if, at the same time, they wear evident proofs of sincerity, solemnity, and concern, and are not conducted in a strain of invective. Whence can this arise, but from the fact, that the Preacher *commends himself to every man's conscience in the manifestation of the truth?*

Very few men, also, think of resenting this ascription, as made in the common intercourse of mankind; unless when made with some appearance of contempt, or malignity. All men hear it continually; yet no man ordinarily conceives it to be unjust or false, unkind or uncivil; nor even as extraordinary or unexpected. On the contrary, it is plainly considered as a thing of course; and is listened to without emotion. Could this be, were the doctrine untrue?

To the evidence, furnished by the consideration of these facts, it ought to be added, that they contain *the direct confession of the whole human race, that the doctrine is true:* a confession, made in several different forms; all of them unequivocal, solemn, and decisive. Of course, it expresses *the real opinion of the whole human race concerning this subject.* But it is undoubtedly true, that in all cases, where mankind have sufficient ability and opportunity to understand a subject, where they examine, and decide, without partiality, and especially where they decide against every bias of human nature, their decision is true, and to be admitted without a question. The present case is absolutely of this nature. We have sufficient opportunity, and discernment, to determine whether we ourselves, and our fellow-men, are sinners, or not. It is certain, that every bias of our minds inclines us to believe ourselves free from sin; and that in pronouncing ourselves sinful, we oppose every prejudice, and every personal interest. But all men have thus pronounced. The decision is therefore just; and is expressed in such a manner, as to admit neither of doubt, nor misconstruction.

5thly. *No man has been ever yet produced as an example of complete holiness in the present world.*

Amid a race of beings, so generally sinful as mankind, a person perfectly holy, could not fail of being distinguished, as wholly extraordinary, by his fellow-men. Amid the numerous, flattering,

panegyrical accounts, which have been given, and which have strongly evinced the disposition of their authors, to say the most favourable things concerning human nature, it is incredible, that we should not find some one spotless subject of their panegyric, if such an one had ever existed. Such a character in the present world would be so extraordinary, as to excite the utmost attention of our race; and the story could not fail of being recorded. Particularly, the opposers of the doctrine, which I am attempting to establish, must certainly know the fact, had any such character existed: for many of them are very industrious and learned men. But no such character has ever been mentioned by them, or by any other person. Yet, according to their system, many such ought to appear in every country, and in every age. Their system is, therefore, false: otherwise, these facts could not exist.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the only person, that ever appeared in this world, *who knew no sin*. Accordingly, he is totally distinguishable in his character from all the children of *Adam;* and has actually been thus distinguished, to such a degree, that no other person has been imagined to approximate at all towards his perfection. In the whole history of man no single, solitary instance of this nature has been ever found. Time has rolled on for six thousand years; the world is, and long has been, filled with myriads of myriads of inhabitants; yet even now a spotless man would be regarded as a prodigy; and the knowledge of so extraordinary a person would be carefully treasured up for the instruction of succeeding generations.

6thly. *This doctrine is proved to every man, who examines his own character, by the state of his own Heart and Life.*

The evidence, furnished to the doctrine from this source, may be advantageously exhibited under the following heads.

1st. *Every such man is, at times, the subject of serious apprehensions concerning his future state.*

These apprehensions certainly prove the mind, in which they exist, to be sinful. No man probably ever believed, that God will, or can, make sinless beings unhappy hereafter; particularly, that, if himself were sinless, God would make *him* unhappy. It is, I think, discernible by Reason, that *perfect love*, or holiness, necessarily *casteth out fear;* or, in other words, that these apprehensions cannot exist in a sinless being. However disposed, therefore, any man may be to combat this doctrine, and however satisfied with his arguments against it; he will find, if he attends to his own thoughts, that he still secretly believes it; and proves that he believes it by his fears concerning his own future existence. Were an Angel from Heaven to declare to him, that he is free from sin, and that through life he would preserve this character; all his fears would unquestionably vanish, and leave him perfectly undisturbed concerning every thing which lies beyond the grave.

2dly. *Every man is conscious, that he does not perform all his duty.*

It will be observed, that I here suppose all men to acknowledge, in their minds, the distinction between right and wrong. There are those indeed, as I before observed, who openly deny this distinction; but as these men use exactly the same language with others, when speaking of their own excellencies and those of their friends, or complaining of the conduct of their enemies; I consider them as admitting this distinction, in their thoughts, equally with the rest of mankind. Certainly, no persons more strenuously insist on their own rights, or complain more bitterly of the wrongs, which they suppose themselves to suffer.

It cannot be denied, that we are fairly bound to do all the good which is in our power. But there is not a man living, who will soberly assert, that he has acted in this manner. The knowledge of those around him concerning his life would refute the assertion, and cover him with blushes for the folly and disingenuousness, which it evinced. The testimony of his Conscience also, concerning his thoughts, would declare it to be false; and accuse him of having added to his former guilt by the insincerity of this assertion.

3dly. *Every man living is conscious of having committed many positive sins.*

This truth may be sufficiently established by two obvious modes of illustration.

No man living durst recite every transaction of his life even to his nearest and best friend. There are things in the story, which he cannot bring himself by any considerations to disclose. This is true concerning his external conduct. Still more is it true concerning his thoughts: because in still greater numbers, and higher degrees, they have violated his sense of moral obligation; and contravened what he secretly believes to be the will of God. Nor is there probably a man living, who has not often rejoiced, that some, both of his thoughts and actions, are now known to himself only, and concealed effectually from his fellow-men.

Again, no man can go into his closet, and solemnly declare to his Maker, that he has not been guilty of positive sins. Even the impudence and pride of the self-righteous *Pharisee*, *who went into the temple to pray*, did not stretch so far as this. The utmost, which he ventured upon, was to *thank God, that he was not as other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or publicans.* He durst not thank God, that he was not so sinful as *Abraham*, *Job*, or *Moses;* all of whom he still knew to be sinful. Much less durst he, or any other man, declare himself, before God, to be absolutely free from moral pollution.

But were we sinless, it would be perfectly easy, safe, and natural, for us to declare the inmost thoughts of our hearts, so far as their moral nature only was concerned, to our fellow-creatures: for we are never afraid to disclose to them, unless in cases where mere prudence prevents, any of our conduct, which we are assured has been right. With the same ease, and consciousness of pro-

priety, should we also assert before God, that we were without sin; if we felt assured, that this was our true character.

Were any man, who was taught the nature of the final judgment, informed by an Angel, that it would commence *this day* and find him *in his present state;* he would tremble at the information. If an exception ought to be made, it must be of him only, who, by a lively faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, a sincere repentance of his sins, and a laborious preparation to give up his account with joy, has acquired strong confidence towards God, and a vigorous hope of Evangelical justification. It hardly needs to be observed, that every such person acknowledges, in the fullest manner, his own sinfulness, and that of all men.

4thly. *Every man, who makes the attempt to do his duty, and abstain from sin, finds the attempt attended by many difficulties.*

When he would do good, evil, very frequently at least, will be *present with him;* and he will *find a law in his members, warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him under captivity. The good, which,* for some reason or other, *he is desirous to do,* he will often fail of doing, and *the evil, which,* for some reason or other, *he wishes not to do,* he, still, will often *do.* To say the least, he will often find an uncomfortable and guilty reluctance to do his duty, and an equally unhappy and guilty disposition to practise sin.

Often, very often, do the best of men, when summoned by their circumstances, and warned by their consciences, to perform acts of piety to God, or beneficence to mankind, of opposition to their lusts, or resistance to temptations, find one *sin* and another *easily besetting*, and many a *weight* hanging heavily upon them. The character of God appears less lovely and venerable, than it has done at other times; and the heart is less open to acts of justice, truth, charity, and forgiveness. Temptations approach with more charms; and sin is stripped of no small part of its deformity. The world assumes new importance, beauty, and power. Evil examples solicit with stronger influence; and evil suggestions awaken doubt, uneasiness, and discouragement. Mysteries, at such seasons, become converted, without much difficulty, into errors; and that, which is inexplicable, is suspected to be untrue. Self-denial is felt, in many instances, to be hard, unnecessary, and scarcely a duty; while indulgence, on the other hand, seems not only inviting, but excusable; not only pleasant, but safe. Accordingly, the duty in hand is left undone; or performed with difficulty, and by halves. The feet drag heavily in *the strait and narrow path;* or turn aside to find relief in a way, less steep, rough, and forbidding.

If such is the case with the best men; it will not be wondered at, that others find their difficulties still greater. In all Christian countries there are multitudes, who are not sanctified, and who yet intend to obtain eternal life: men taught in their childhood to know and fear God; to reverence their duty, and to perform it in every external manner; to attend on the worship of God; to read, and

believe, his word; to deal justly, kindly, and truly, with their fellow-men; to watch, and resist, their spiritual enemies within and without; and universally to respect the dictates of their own consciences. Men, habituated to such a course of life from the beginning, are often decent, amiable, and highly respected. Yet every such man, when convinced of sin, will, in unbosoming himself to a Minister of the Gospel, in whom he confides, freely confess, that he has never really done his duty in a single instance; but has always been a sinner merely; that he finds not in his heart a disposition ever to pray in such a manner, as his conscience tells him God requires, and much less a preparation of soul to perform his duty at large.

Men of profligate characters are in still more deplorable circumstances. They do not even attempt to perform their duty at all; find no struggle between conscience and inclination; slide down the declivity of sin without an effort to stop their dangerous career; and satisfied with the smoothness and slipperiness of their course, give themselves no concern about the gulf, which yawns at the bottom.

Whence do these things arise? Certainly not from external circumstances. The profligate has no more external difficulties than the conscientious man; and might, if he pleased, be equally decent and amiable. The conscientious man has no more external difficulties than the man of piety; and might, if he pleased, be a Christian also. The Christian has no more external difficulties at one time, than at another; and might, if he pleased, perform his duty with the same exactness and ease, and be always equally virtuous. By this I do not mean indeed, that, in the metaphysical sense, their external difficulties are precisely the same; but that they are so much the same, as in no case to prevent them at all from performing their duty, if they were suitably inclined; or, in other words, if they possessed the disposition of Angels. The *heart* undoubtedly is in each of these cases the only essential bar to obedience. Were the *heart right with God*, the Christian would be perfect at all times; the conscientious man would become a Christian; and the profligate would cease from his abandonment, and become not only decent and amiable, but a Christian also. This reluctance to duty, therefore, these difficulties found in attempts to abstain from sin, prove the character to be corrupt, and the heart to be sinful. As they attend all men; they prove the common nature to be polluted; and evince, unanswerably, the sinful character of all the children of *Adam*.

SERMON XXX.

UNIVERSALITY OF SIN PROVED BY MAN'S REJECTION OF THE WORD OF GOD.

JEREMIAH viii. 9.—*The Wise Men are ashamed; they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the Word of the Lord, and what Wisdom is in them?*

"*The Wise ones are confounded,*
They are dismayed, and ensnared;
Behold, they have spurned at the Word of Jehovah;
And as for Wisdom, what is there in them?"

Blayney's Translation.

IN my last discourse, I proposed to consider, at length, the following Scriptural doctrine:

That, in consequence of the Apostacy of Adam, all Men have sinned.

In pursuing this design I exhibited the Universality of sin,

I. *From Revelation;* and,

II. *From Facts.*

From each of these sources I adduced a series of proofs, which appeared to me to furnish a complete establishment of the doctrine. Still it will be useful to examine so important a subject in a variety of modes; and to learn in what manner other sources furnish evidence of this great Scriptural declaration. I propose, therefore, to illustrate the doctrine, at the present time, from *another Fact;* viz. *the rejection of the Word of God by Mankind.*

In the verse preceding the Text, the people of *Judea* are exhibited as saying, in the midst of all their apostacy and wickedness, *We are wise, and the Law of the Lord is with us:* that is, We are holy, or virtuous; and the Law of the Lord is possessed, understood, and obeyed, by us; is in our hands, in our minds and in our hearts. To this arrogant declaration the prophet replies, *Lo, certainly in vain made he it! the pen of the Scribes is in vain;* that is, "To you God has given his Law or Word, in vain; *The false pen of the Scribes hath converted it into falsehood.*"* "The false interpretations of the Law by the Scribes have changed the Law itself in the form, in which *they* teach, and *you* receive it, into falsehood; and to you, therefore, notwithstanding its excellence, it is in vain."

* Blayney.

The wise men, themselves, he proceeds to observe in the text, *are* by these means *ashamed*, or *confounded, and taken, or ensnared*, in their own false interpretations and reasonings on the Law; and can form no consistent, no safe, scheme either of doctrine or practice. Nay, their mode of understanding, and explaining, the word of God is, in effect, *an absolute rejection of it*. Consequently *there is no Wisdom*, no holiness, or virtue, *in them*. Their rejection of the word of the Lord is a plain proof, that they are totally destitute of all moral good.

What was true of these Wise men, or Scribes, is unquestionably true of all other men in the like circumstances. To the Scribes the word of God was offered; and was enjoined on them with divine authority. They disliked and rejected it. This conduct proved them to be void of holiness. In like manner it has been offered to immense multitudes of other men, who have disliked and rejected it also. The consequence follows irresistibly, that *they* as well as these *Israelites*, are void of holiness.

Holiness is plainly the only virtue, or moral excellence; the only character, which can recommend Intelligent beings to God. The Scriptures know of no other; and, although they call this character by different names, such as holiness, righteousness, goodness, and wisdom, they still mean, always, the same thing. Nor can Reason devise any other excellence of this nature. Holiness and Virtue are, therefore, synonimous.

The Doctrine of the Text, then, generally expressed, is this:

The Rejection of the Word of God, is decisive proof, that those, who reject it, are destitute of Virtue, or moral excellence.

To illustrate this Doctrine, will be the object of the present Discourse; and the illustration will be derived from three considerations.

I. *The Nature of the Word, which is rejected:*

II. *The Manner, in which it has been rejected:*

III. *The Doctrines, which those, who have rejected it, have preferred to it.*

I. *The Nature of the Word which is rejected, strongly illustrates this doctrine.*

Under this head I observe,

1st. *The Word, which is thus rejected, is the Law, or preceptive Will, of the Creator, and Ruler, of all things.*

As God created us, he has the highest possible property in us, and the most absolute right both to us and our services. This right can be bounded by nothing but his pleasure. Whatever is his, he has an unlimited right to dispose of as he pleases; nor can any one warrantably say to him, in this respect, *What doest thou?* Hence his right to prescribe the manner, in which we and all other creatures shall be employed and disposed of, is plainly supreme.

If, then, we refuse to render to him the obedience, which he requires in all, or any, of the cases, or degrees, prescribed by him;

we are guilty of refusing to render to him that, which is his own. No injustice, no fraud, no robbery, can be more palpable, or extreme, than this. No injustice to man can be compared with it: for nothing is man's, by a right, which can be compared with this right of God.

2dly. *This Law, in all its requisitions, is perfectly reasonable and just.*

It is contained in the two great commands, *Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart;* and *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself.*

Both these precepts are in the highest degree, and in the most obvious manner, just and reasonable; and would demand our obedience with unanswerable propriety, if the *nature* of the precepts only were regarded. Men, in obeying them, would act in the best manner possible for themselves; and would most promote both public and personal happiness. Nay, there is no other manner, of acting, which can be justly called desirable. Every departure from conformity to these precepts is, of course, evil, and of malignant influence on the well-being of the universe.

God is infinitely excellent, as well as infinitely great and awful; and on account of this excellence most clearly deserves, and most justly claims, the highest Love of his Intelligent creatures. Nothing more is, therefore, demanded by this Law, than ought cheerfully to be done, if no such Law existed.

3dly. *The Law of God is good, as well as just; profitable to those who obey, as well as honourable to him who is obeyed.*

Obedience to this Law constitutes the only real worth of rational Beings; and is the sum of all those affections, and their consequences, which form the internal happiness of man; the most essential and valuable part of his happiness. The true loveliness, dignity, and excellence of Man is nothing, beside that state of the mind, which is exact conformity to this Law. From this character, and from this alone, spring the peace and self-approbation, the internal harmony and delight, which are the proper "prize of Virtue;" the independent and eternal possession of every good mind.

In the same degree is the Usefulness of rational beings formed. Man is useful, only when he is voluntarily useful. Obedience to the Law of God is all, that is intended by voluntary usefulness. Love to God, is the great and only source of usefulness to him, in his kingdom; and Love to Man is the only source of voluntary beneficence to Man. The *Love, which is the fulfilling of the Law,* is a vital and immortal principle of doing good to all men, both friends and enemies, at all times, and in every manner. Nor is there any real and voluntary beneficence, beside what springs from this principle. Rational Beings, wholly under its influence, would form a perfect state of happiness in any world; and such beings, freed from all restraints, would, if destitute of it, create consummate misery. He, then, who refuses obedience to this Law, is

guilty of gross injustice to God, relinquishes all personal excellence, peace, happiness, and worth; and, renouncing all voluntary usefulness on the one hand, prepares himself, on the other, to become a nuisance to the Universe.

4thly. *To this obedience an endless and perfect Reward is annexed.*

Were the Law hard in its requisitions, and Obedience to it severe and distressing; yet, if crowned in the end with a reward ample and abundant, the whole of the Requisitions, taken together, would not be unreasonable, nor undesirable. The time, during which we are here required to obey, is but a moment: the Reward, on the contrary, is eternal. The hardship of obedience must, therefore, be transient and trifling; while the reward would be endless, and therefore immense in its value.

To obedience, then, Reason and Wisdom direct, and urge, with motives of infinite power; and from disobedience, with similar motives, deter. Nothing, of course, can be a reason for disobedience, were our present happiness only concerned, except a disposition so depraved, as to prefer sin without a future reward, to holiness, with immortal glory.

5thly. *To disobedience a Punishment is threatened, which is also endless.*

Every creature who disobeys, therefore, chooses to hazard endless wo for the pleasure of disobeying, rather than to gain eternal life with the pain found, or supposed to be found, in obeying.

So plainly do Men *choose death rather than life;* and in *sinning against God wrong their own souls.*

In this state of sin and wretchedness, however, God did not leave them to perish, as they chose; but he sent his own *beloved Son, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person,* to become their Atonement, and Intercessor. Through his Mediation he proposed to them to repent of their former disobedience and to return to obedience, to virtue, and to his everlasting favour. On these conditions he promised to receive and bless them, notwithstanding their Apostacy.

In this situation he placed them in his word; and commanded them, in what may be called a New Law, a Law of grace and mercy, to believe in Christ, to repent of their sins, and return to holiness. The Gospel is a Law; and of equal authority and obligation with the moral Law. *God commandeth all men every where to repent. And this,* saith *John, is his commandment, that we believe on him whom he hath sent.* The proposals of the Gospel are, therefore, not merely declarations, or promises; but a Law; compliance with which is the highest duty of Mankind.

What, then, is the nature of this duty? In the most summary language, it is this: That we renounce our sins, and return to God, and to obedience; committing ourselves with an affectionate confidence to Christ, as our Instructer, Intercessor, and Lord; and as

an all-sufficient and acceptable Propitiation to God the Father. This done, our sins will be forgiven; and our title to endless life renewed, enlarged, and made sure beyond defeat and danger.

To beings ruined and destroyed, as we are, Reason would naturally conclude, any escape from the terrible evils, to which we are certainly exposed without hope by our apostacy, would be not only acceptable, but transporting. Nothing, it would seem, would be asked, or wished, but to have the way pointed out, and the conditions made known. This, only, being done, all the miserable beings who are thus exposed, must, one would expect, hasten with rapture and amazement to comply with the terms of reconciliation, and *lay hold on the hope set before* them.

But the terms, instead of being thus hard, are the easiest, which can be wished, and the most reasonable of which we can form a conception. They are in the highest degree desirable for their own sake, even if they were to be followed by no reward. The Faith, the Repentance, and the Holiness, required, are themselves the beginning, and the consummation, of the best of all characters, and the springs of a happiness, far more exquisite, and sincere, than any other. Besides, they are indispensably necessary to all other good. No permanent, no sincere good can be enjoyed by him, who does not thus believe, repent, and obey. God cannot love, nor bless him. *He* cannot be approved and peaceful within, nor useful and happy without. Nor can a World, inhabited by such beings, be a happy World at all. On the contrary, all the mischiefs, found in this world, would revive beyond the grave, and disturb and desolate Heaven itself, were impenitent, unbelieving, and disobedient Men to become its inhabitants. Happiness springs from the voluntary exertions of rational beings. But beings not holy, as none of the human race can be without Faith and Repentance, never voluntarily do good, but always evil. Thus God requires nothing, but what is necessary, absolutely necessary, for Man; when he demands these, as the conditions of their acceptance and happiness.

In the mean time, this happiness is not merely offered, but enjoined. All the authority of the Eternal God is employed to enforce compliance. Nay, he goes farther; and daily condescends to entreat us to be thus reconciled to him. But to all these we return a peremptory refusal, and a scornful, indignant rejection of this benevolent and glorious Word of the Lord.

What Reason can be assigned for this Conduct? Not Argument; for all Arguments plead most powerfully for our compliance. Not common Prudence, or a wise regard for our Well-Being: for we disregard and destroy it. Nothing but Sin, and the Love of sinning; mere corruption; mere depravity. No higher evidence can be given, that *there is no Wisdom*, or Virtue, *in* Men.

II. *The Manner, in which the Word of God is rejected by Man, is another striking proof of his destitution of Virtue.*

Particularly, *The Word of God is rejected with Unbelief.*

Unbelief, with respect to *any* object of our Faith, has no rational, no vindicable ground, except the want of sufficient evidence. But the Word of God is attended with all the evidence, which can be supposed to attend such a subject; all that ought to be wished, or asked; and much more than could, without actual proof, be rationally expected. Accordingly, all good men, to whom this evidence has been proposed, have, without an exception, acknowledged the evidence itself; and admitted the Word, which it supports, to be that of God.

When it is once admitted to be his Word, his own veracity is the highest possible proof of the truth of every thing, which he has spoken. Whenever it is rejected in this case, it is rejected, because it is disliked; not because it is not proved. The Evidence is rejected because we dislike the Truth; not the Truth, because we dislike the Evidence.

Unbelief is either *speculative*, or *practical*. In *speculative unbelief we deny the truth* of the Word of God: in practical unbelief we admit its truth, but reject its influence.

In the speculative unbelief of Men the unworthy manner of rejecting the Word of God is manifest in the following particulars.

1st. *It is rejected on the ground of vain and deceitful Arguments.*

This will appear from a variety of facts.

The arguments, on which one unbeliever relies, do not appear to have satisfied other unbelievers. Every new Infidel Writer advances *his own scheme* of refuting the evidence, or rather his own objections; (for refutation there is none) and evidently places no reliance on the schemes of his predecessors. This has been the constant progress of Infidelity from the beginning to the present time. No instance occurs, in which any Infidel has thought it proper to come forward with a defence of the works, or Arguments, of any former Infidel. The arguments of each appear important, and perhaps satisfactory, to himself; but are visibly of little force in the eye of his successors. All, except his own, are, tacitly at least, acknowledged to be unavailing in the eye of each; and his own, in the eyes of all who follow him.

But if these arguments were sound, they would be acknowledged, felt, and insisted on, by all; and would anew be pleaded with confidence, supported, and relied on, by others, as well as by the inventer.

2dly. *When these objections have been completely and often refuted, they still allege them again without taking any notice of the refutations.*

These refutations have been multiplied so much, so openly, and so often alleged, and so triumphantly urged, that nothing but despair of replying with success could prevent unbelievers from at-

tempting a reply. Yet we find it wholly neglected, and unattempted, by their successors. They now allege anew the old objections; and plainly because they can find no others: the whole circle being exhausted; and nothing remaining to modern Infidels but a reiteration of what has been done by those, who went before them. While any thing new remained, they laid no stress on what had been done before. Now they are contented to repeat the old, threadbare objections over and over, without placing them in any new light, or supporting them with any new evidence; although so often and so completely answered, as to make the renewed advancement of them ridiculous. Were they honest men, they would first reply to the answers, heretofore given to these objections; and then, but not till then, allege them anew.

3dly. *They rarely attempt to argue at all; but attack their antagonists, and defend themselves, chiefly, with contempt, sneers, and ridicule.*

Sneers, Contempt, and Ridicule, are not Arguments; and were never needed to defend a sound cause. The Cause, which can find sound Reasons, will never be supported by these means. Yet Infidelity has made these her chief engines throughout her whole progress; and relied on them supremely in all her assaults upon Revelation.

Wherever this conduct appears; wherever argument is deserted and forgotten, and ridicule, sneers, and contempt, are the weapons of attack, or defence; a strong suspicion of the goodness of the cause exists of course; and a solid reason is furnished for believing it to be unsound and false. Infidelity has always thus done; and has, therefore, always laboured under very strong suspicions of this nature.

4thly. *Men have exhibited violent Hatred to the Word of God in this rejection.*

This hatred, from the beginning to the present time, has been manifested by all classes of men, who have rejected the word of the Lord; and by most, if not all, the individuals, who have thus rejected it.

This hatred has been strongly manifested in the contempt, ridicule, and sneers, of which I have already spoken. It has strongly manifested itself in an uninterrupted course of obloquy against God, the Redeemer, the Scriptures, the Sabbath, and the Sanctuary; against the Church, the Ministers, the Worship, and the Character, of God; against Religion at large; against conscientiousness, morality, and duty of every kind; against all that is virtue, and all that are virtuous.

Nor has it been less abundantly manifested in an immense train of oppositions, and persecutions. The *Jews* began the course in the most furious cruelty against Christ and Christians. The *Heathens*, *Mohammedans*, and *Papists* have continued it. *Infidels* are now treading in their steps; and, although perpetually railing

against persecution, have proved the most bloody and vehement persecutors, that have existed since the world began.

One spirit has animated them all; and one conduct characterized them all, from the beginning to the present time. No more deformed, odious, depraved exhibitions have been ever made of the human character: no more flagrant or convincing proofs of human corruption have been ever presented to the eye of man. All also, who have been concerned in this rejection, have uniformly displayed a vile, depraved personal character; a love of sin, a hatred to holiness, pre-eminent and wonderful. The more spiritual and heavenly, the more holy and excellent, any doctrines or precepts of the Word of God are, the more they have been hated, maligned, and blasphemed. Yet all that God hath done, and spoken, in his Word, has been highly glorious and becoming to a God, highly beneficial and necessary to man, and productive of no other end, but making man virtuous and happy. On the contrary, all this opposition has sprung from sin, and been marked with gross and dreadful depravity, in every stage, and in every form.

The *practical unbelief* of Mankind has been substantially of the same Character, and distinguished by the same deformity. But here the unbeliever has openly condemned himself by acknowledging the word of God in speech, and denying it in practice. An inconsistence and shame attend *him*, therefore, which do not in the like circumstances attend the *speculative Unbeliever*. In the mean time, his rejection of the Scriptures, as the rule of his obedience, and the means of eternal life to himself, is as absolute as that of the professed Infidel. His speculative views are different; but his heart is essentially the same. His *carnal mind*, as truly, as that of the Infidel, *is enmity against God; not subject to his law, neither indeed can be.* It is not strange, therefore, that we see unbelievers, of both kinds, exhibiting their rejection of the Word of God substantially in the same manner.

III. *The truth, contained in the text, is strongly illustrated by the Doctrines, both speculative and practical, which those, who have rejected the Scriptures, have preferred to them.*

The four great classes of men, who have openly rejected the word of God, are *Jews, and Mohammedans, Heathens, and Infidels.* Each of these I shall consider, summarily, in the order specified.

1st. *The Jews*, although professedly receiving the old Testament as the Word of God, yet, as you well know, rejected and still reject, Christ and his Gospel, and of course the system of religion, which he has taught to mankind. *In rejecting Christ* they reject, of course, all the types which shadowed, and all the prophecies which foretold, his character, advent, and mediation. As those types and prophecies terminate only in Christ; so without him they have no real meaning. Their true import, therefore, was denied by the *Jews*. *In rejecting the Gospel* they set aside all the

Evangelical declarations and doctrines, contained in *the Law and the prophets;* particularly the Gospel as preached to *Abraham* and his posterity; and all those just and spiritual exhibitions of the Law, delivered to us by Christ and his Apostles. With these things in view, it must unquestionably be conceded, that the *Jews* are fairly numbered among those, who openly reject the Word of God; not less truly so, than those of their Ancestors, who apostatized to Heathenism.

It is unnecessary for me to dwell, in detail, on the doctrines, substituted by these people for those in the Word of God. You well know from the Scriptures themselves, that they placed their holiness, and their hopes, in a mere round of external services; such as long prayers, ostentatious fastings, ablutions, and other external purifications; *tything*, *mint*, *anise*, *and cummin;* and many other things of the like nature. In all these the heart was utterly unconcerned; and the whole scheme of religion was confined to a course of mere external actions; from which integrity, justice, benevolence, and piety, were wholly excluded. Instead of these things, they licensed and practised the most abominable opposition to God, and the most scandalous hatred and persecution of their fellow-men. A considerable part denied a future existence; and justified all the indulgence of pride, avarice, and sensuality, which have every where been connected with that denial. Another part openly sanctioned disobedience to the fifth command by permitting a son to devote that part of his property, which was necessary for the subsistence of his parents, to the service of the Temple; and warranting him to withhold from them, in this manner, all the duties of filial piety. At the same time, they persecuted, with the fury of maniacs, men of real piety; bound heavy burdens; shut up to their countrymen the access to religious knowledge; devoured widows' houses; and wallowed in every species of sensual pollution. For all their iniquities, at the same time, they found a sanction in some *tradition of their Elders*, or some invention of their own; and those who taught these things, were believed by their countrymen to be men of distinguished virtue. Such were, summarily, the doctrines, both speculative and practical, which the *Jews* preferred to the Word of God. The spirit, which could even acquiesce in such doctrines as these, much more which could deliberately prefer them to the Law and Gospel of JEHOVAH, can plainly have been no other, than that of *a sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers.*

2dly. *Mohammed*, it is well known, adopted, according to his own testimony, the religion of *Moses and Christ;* and professedly republished it in a new form to mankind. But in this republication he left out, wholly, the spirit of the Scriptural Religion; and in many respects did not preserve even *the form of godliness.* His two great doctrines were, *That there is but one God, and That Mohammed is his prophet.* By the latter doctrine he secured to

himself the right of dictating to his followers just what he pleased. Accordingly he delivered to them a collection of precepts, requiring nothing but a course of external services, without the least goodness of heart; and promised Heaven to prayers, ablutions, fastings, alms, pilgrimages to Mecca, and circumcision. Religion he considered as founded on *cleanliness;* which he declared to be *the one half of Faith, and the key of Prayer. Fasting* he pronounced to be *the gate of Religion.* He allowed four wives to every one of his followers; and as many concubines, as each was able to maintain. Heaven he converted into a mere mansion of debauchery; and changed the mild and rational mode of propagating Religion, taught by Christ and his Apostles, into a regular system of the most brutal and barbarous persecution. In a word, his doctrines flattered, and licensed every human corruption, every sordid lust, every sinful indulgence.

3dly. *The doctrines of Heathenism are still more deformed, and still more expressive of opposition to God.*

Instead of one God, the Heathen, as you know, believed in many. Instead of the perfect JEHOVAH, they *heaped up to themselves* Gods *after their own lusts;* debased by filial impiety, fraud theft, falsehood, injustice, treachery, murder, and lewdness, indulged in every manner, which can debase an Intelligent nature. They worshipped men, beasts, birds, fishes, reptiles, and insects. They prostrated themselves before trees, shrubs, plants, stocks, and stones. They sacrificed human victims; prostituted men and women in religious services; and sanctioned every violation of purity, justice, kindness, and piety. Read the first chapter of the Epistle to the *Romans;* and you will find a short, but exact and affecting, account of what they not only did, but justified, licensed, and enjoined.

4thly. *Modern Infidelity* has, in various instances, strongly commended the ancient Heathenism, both partially, and in the gross; and in publishing its own doctrines has shown, that the spirit by which it is actuated, is no other than the very spirit of its predecessors. It has denied the existence and perfections of God; at times partially; at other times wholly. It has admitted his existence, and denied his providence; the accountableness of man; a future state; the distinction between right and wrong, or holiness and sin, piety, and rebellion; has declared all that men can do with impunity to be right; has licensed wrath, revenge, murder, pride, oppression, gluttony, drunkenness, fornication, adultery, and incest. Surely it is unnecessary for me to observe, that the spirit, manifested in the doctrines, which teach these things, is in the highest degree hostile to God, to truth, and to righteousness.

To *Jews and Infidels* the Gospel has been directly published in form. To a great part of mankind it was published in the days of the Apostles; and has been extensively offered to many nations in succeeding periods of time. That it has not made an universal

progress over the globe, has been owing to the fact, that those, to whom it has been offered, have in so many instances refused it acceptance. Had the Ancestors of the present generation of men given the Religion of the Bible a welcome admission to their hearts, in the days of the Apostles; it would long since have been preached to every family under heaven. Men, therefore, have stopped its progress; and not God.

But, as the fact has been, the Gospel has been published to a great part of the human race; and by a great proportion of these it has been rejected. So general has been this rejection, as entirely to determine the true nature of the human character: for it cannot be pretended, that there is one original nature in those who have heard and rejected the Gospel, and another in the rest of mankind.

It ought to be added on this part of the subject, that many of those who have professedly received the Word of God in the Christian world, have, in instances innumerable, in every country, and every age, exhibited the same disposition in the same manner. These men have almost universally denied the real import of the book, which they have professed to receive. Its spiritual and heavenly doctrines they have, in forms very diverse, but in design and spirit wholly the same, lowered continually down, so as to suit, or at least so as not to disgust, the taste of a sinful heart. The extent also, and purity, of the Scriptural precepts they have contracted, and debased, so as to license, in a professed consistency with them, a great part of those evil practices, which are gratifying to a polluted, sinful mind. The Doctrines of the Gospel they have with one consent reduced to the level of mere natural Religion; and *that* the natural Religion, in substance, which was taught by the graver heathen philosophers, and is now echoed by the more decent Infidels. The precepts of the Gospel, also, they have taught to speak a moral language, undistinguishable, as to its import, from that of *Plato*, *Seneca*, and *Herbert*. Thus in truth, notwithstanding their professed belief of the word of God, they have rejected both the Law and the Gospel; and rejected them for the doctrines and precepts, which they thus inculcate. That such is the real design of all these men I am convinced by this remarkable fact; viz. that, when driven from one error, they always take refuge in another; and never come a whit nearer, however often confuted, to the reception of the truth. The sum of the argument, then, is this: God has given to mankind a law, for the government of their moral conduct, which is not only reasonable and just in itself, but dictated by infinite benevolence on his part, and supremely profitable to them: a law demanding of them, that they *love him with all the heart*, and that they *love each other as themselves*. This character, which is no other than the Image of his moral perfection, is the supreme excellence, and the only moral excellence, of Intelligent beings. *In itself* it is high and indispensable enjoyment

to every such being; and in *its efficacy* it is the only voluntary cause of all other enjoyments: a cause, existing originally and supremely in *Him*, and by derivation existing extensively in *them*.

This Law, therefore, is a perfect law; and worthy of JEHOVAH. Were men virtuously disposed; were they not depraved; were they not sinful; their obedience to its commands would be immediate, universal, and absolute. Instead of this, wherever it has been proposed to them, they have chosen to disobey it, notwithstanding the glorious and eternal reward, promised to their obedience, and the awful penalty, threatened to disobedience. What stronger proof of their depravity can be demanded?

There is, however, one proof still more affecting. In the miserable situation, into which men brought themselves by their Apostacy, God regarded them with infinite compassion, and undertook to rescue them from their sin and misery. For this end he sent his own beloved Son into the world, to live here a humble, painful, and persecuted life, and to die an accursed and excruciating death, *to make* in the human soul *an end of sin, to finish transgression, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness*. In consequence of his atonement, God has offered, anew, to receive the fallen race of *Adam* into his favour, on the conditions of Faith and Repentance in the Redeemer: conditions in themselves indispensable to their return to God, and to obedience; indispensable to their own comfort, honour, and virtue; and beyond expression easy, reasonable, and desirable. As he foresaw that they would still resist this boundless love, and would fail of it through their corruption, ignorance, error, and prejudice; he published his Gospel to enlighten them, and sent his Spirit to sanctify them, that by all means they might be saved. Still in a multitude of instances almost literally endless, a multitude so great as to prove this to be the common character of all the children of *Adam*, they have rejected these most merciful proffers of boundless good, *crucified* his son *afresh, cast contempt on his cross, accounted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and done despite to the Spirit of Grace*.

And now, my friends and brethren, *judge, I pray you, between* God *and* his *vineyard. What could have been done to his vineyard, that he has not done in it? Wherefore, when he looked, that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth poisonous berries?** Wherefore brought it forth *the grapes of Sodom, and the clusters of Gomorrah? Every tree is known by its fruit. This*† *vine is* plainly, therefore, of *the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah. Its grapes are grapes of gall; its clusters are bitter. Its wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps*.

Were man virtuously disposed, it is incredible, nay, it is plainly impossible, that he should not yield himself to this Law, as soon as

* Lowth. † Deut. xxxii. 32.

it is proposed to him. As obedience to this Law is the only excellence of conduct; so a virtuous state of mind, a virtuous disposition, a virtuous character, by all of which phrases we intend that unknown cause, heretofore specified, which gives birth to virtuous rather than to vicious conduct, would so soon as this Law was proposed to it, render, in a sense instinctively, an immediate, cheerful, and universal obedience.

Were such a mind, also, to apostatize, and yet to retain a disposition in a preponderating degree virtuous; were it afterwards to be informed of a method, by which it might return to obedience, and the favour of God; it would be plainly impossible, that such a mind should not receive this information, and embrace this method of returning, with readiness, and even with rapture. If, at the same time, the terms of its reinstatement in obedience, and in the divine favour, were in themselves eminently easy and reasonable, and in their efficacy productive of its highest future amiableness, dignity, and enjoyment; if they were such, as rendered it peculiarly lovely in the sight of God, and prepared it to be peculiarly useful to its fellow-creatures; such a mind would, beyond a doubt, seize the terms themselves with delight, and the divine object, which they secured, with ecstasy.

The rejection of the word of God, of the Law and the Gospel alike, is, therefore, entirely inexplicable, unless we acknowledge, that the disposition by which it is rejected, is a disposition directly opposed to that of a virtuous mind; wholly unlike that with which *Adam* was created; and the genuine moral likeness of *Adam* after his Apostacy.

SERMON XXXI.

DEPRAVITY OF MAN.—ITS DEGREE.

ECCLESIASTES viii. 11.—*Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.*

IN the two last discourses, I proposed for consideration the following doctrine: *That in consequence of the Apostacy of Adam all men have sinned;* and endeavoured to prove the Universality of sin in the former of these discourses;

1st. *From Revelation:* and,

2dly. *From Facts:*

And in the latter *from the great fact, that mankind have rejected the Word of the Lord.*

It is now my design to examine, in several particulars, *the Degree, in which the sinfulness of man exists.* On this subject I observe,

1st. *That the human character is not depraved to the full extent of the human powers.*

It has been said, neither unfrequently, nor by men void of understanding, *that man is as depraved a being, as his faculties will permit him to be;* but it has been said without consideration, and without truth. Neither the Scriptures, nor Experience, warrant this assertion. *Wicked men and seducers,* it is declared, *will wax worse and worse; deceiving and being deceived.* During the first half of human life this may, perhaps, be explained by the growth of the faculties; but during a considerable period, preceding its termination, it cannot be thus explained: for the faculties decay, while the depravity still increases. Nations, also, are declared, to be at some periods of time, far worse than at others; although it cannot be pretended, that during the period specified their faculties were superior. *Saul* appears to have been a man of more talents than *Jeroboam; Jeroboam* than *Ahab;* and *Uzziah* than either; yet *Ahab* was a worse man than *Jeroboam; Jeroboam* than *Saul;* and *Saul* than *Uzziah.* The *Young Man,* who came to Christ, to know *what good thing he should do, to have eternal life,* was certainly less depraved, than his talents would have permitted him to be.

Like him, we see, daily, many men, who neither are, nor profess to be, Christians, and who, instead of being wicked to a degree commensurate to the extent of their faculties, go through life in the exercise of dispositions so sincere, just, and amiable, and in the performance of actions so upright and beneficent, as to secure a high degree of respect and affection from ourselves, and from all

with whom they are connected. It certainly cannot be said, that such men are as sinful as many others possessed of powers far inferior; much less that they are as sinful as they can be. We also see individuals, at times, assume, without any visible enlargement of their faculties, a new and surprising degree of depravity at once; and become suddenly far more fraudulent, false, lewd, cruel, revengeful, impious, and universally abandoned, than at a period not long preceding. In the families, of which we are members, we have abundant opportunity to learn, from so intimate a connexion, the true characters of all who compose them; and are furnished daily with decisive evidence, that they are far less profligate than, with their faculties, they might become. Those, who make the assertion, against which I am contending, will find themselves, if they will examine, rarely believing, that their wives and children, though not Christians, are Fiends.

2dly. *There are certain characteristics of human nature, which, considered by themselves, are innocent.*

Such are hunger, thirst, the fear of suffering, and the desire of happiness; together with several others. All these are inseparable, not only from the rational, but also from the animal, nature, as existing in this world; and accompany the Christian through every degree of holiness, which he attains, as truly as the sinner. The two last; the desire of happiness, and the fear of suffering; are inseparable from the rational, and even from the percipient, nature.

3dly. *Some of the natural human characteristics are amiable.*

Such are natural affection: the simplicity and sweetness of disposition in children, often found also in persons of adult years; compassion; generosity; modesty; and what is sometimes called natural conscientiousness; that is, a fixed and strong sense of the importance of doing that, which is right. These characteristics appear to have adorned *the Young Man*, whom I have already mentioned. We know that they are amiable, because we are informed that *Jesus, beholding him, loved him.* In the same manner we, and all others, who are not abandoned, love them always, and irresistibly, whenever they are presented to our view. They all, also, are required, and exist, in every Christian; enhancing his holiness, and rendering him a better man. Without them it is not easy to perceive how the Christian character could exist. Accordingly, *St. Paul* exhibits those, who are destitute of these attributes, as being literally profligates.

4thly. *These and all other qualities of the mind are, however, means either of virtue, or sin, according to the nature of that controlling Disposition, or Energy, which constitutes the moral character.*

By this disposition, or energy, I intend *that unknown cause, whence it arises, that the actions of the mind are either sinful or virtuous.* On this energy depends the moral nature of all actions, and the moral character of every mind. This character, and these actions, are variously, and extensively, modified by the attributes

above mentioned. But the moral nature is not changed. So far as they have a prevailing influence, a sinful disposition is checked, and prevented from operating in the worst manner, and degree. Under the prevalence of a sinful disposition, these attributes are partly extinguished, and partly converted into instruments of sin. In a virtuous mind they all become means of virtue, and increase the energy of such a mind.

5thly. *There is not in the Mind, by nature, or in an unregenerated state, any real moral excellence, or Evangelical virtue.*

For I know, says *St. Paul, that in me, (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing. The carnal mind*, says the same Apostle, *is enmity against God, not subject to his law, neither indeed can be.* And again; *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned. That which is born*, saith our SAVIOUR, *of the flesh, is flesh. Without faith*, says *St. Paul, it is impossible to please God.*

6thly. *The heart of Man, after all the abatements are made, which can be made, is set to do evil, in a most affecting and dreadful manner.*

Of this truth, the Text is a direct and very forcible assertion. The word, which is rendered, *fully set*, in our translation, is used by *Ahasuerus*, Esther vii. 5, to express *the daring presumption, with which Haman had risen up to destroy Esther and her nation.* It is also said to denote *being filled with a violent propensity, as the sails of a ship are filled, when borne along by a powerful blast.* A strong tendency to evil in the heart of the sons of men, therefore, is here asserted in very forcible terms.

In considering the degree of iniquity, indicated in this and similar passages, it is not my design, nor within my power or wish, to settle this point with mathematical exactness. In the Scriptures, God has exhibited this subject in an indefinite, and yet in a more impressive and affecting manner, than any, which mankind have substituted. No views of human corruption are so affecting, or so awful, as those, which are presented to us in the Word of God. This example may be confidently followed; and no man is required to limit this subject more exactly, than it has been done by his Maker.

With these observations premised, I shall proceed to adduce several proofs of the doctrine, expressed in the text.

I. *The Scriptures directly assert this doctrine in the fullest manner.*

Every imagination of Man's heart, saith God, *is only evil, continually.* Of the Gentiles, the Apostle declares, that *they are without excuse; because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations; and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools. Who changed the truth of God*

into a lie, and worshipped, and served the creature, more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up to vile affections. And as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them up to a reprobate mind. Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, Whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventers of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God (that they, which commit such things, are worthy of death) not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

Of the *Jews*, the same Apostle says, Rom. iii. 9, *What then, are we better than they? No, in no wise; for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin. As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their mouth is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips. Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood. There is no fear of God before their eyes.—Now we know, that what things soever the Law saith, it saith to them, who are under the Law; that every mouth might be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God.—Therefore, by deeds of Law, shall no flesh living be justified.*

Such is the character of men, given in form, and in the course of the most important logical discussion contained in the Scriptures, by the Apostle *Paul*. Consonant with this representation are all the exhibitions, made in the Old and New Testament, of this subject. The depravity, represented, is not only declared to be universal, but also to be of this high and dreadful malignity. Mankind are not exhibited as prone to one sin only, but to all these, and all other sins; and not *prone* to these sins merely, but filled with them as attributes, and executing them swiftly and dreadfully as practices.

II. *The same truth is evident to every man, if he examines the subject faithfully, from the state of his own heart and life.*

This very extensive field of evidence can now be explored only in a very imperfect manner: but a little attention to it will in no small degree illustrate and prove the doctrine.

1st. *Every Man, who scrutinizes his own heart at all, knows, that, naturally, he in no sense obeys the first and great command of the Law of God: Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart.*

This is the first, and altogether the most important, duty of Intelligent creatures; and is plainly that duty, separated from which, no other can be performed. All possible motives in the highest possible degrees conspire to induce a rational being to perform it.

If, then, these motives do not influence the heart; if we love not our Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor, the Author of all good, and himself the Infinite Good; we cannot be imagined to love with right principles any other being. If we perform not our plain duty to him, we cannot be supposed to perform our duty to any other.

2dly. *All men are daily reproached by their own Consciences, as being greatly and continually guilty of Sin.*

The fear of the anger of God, and of future punishment, and the pride, which every man feels in thinking himself of a good and honourable character, are biasses, which strongly influence us to reject, as much as possible, so humiliating a doctrine as this. But, in spite of both, our Consciences, irresistibly impelled by the truth, declare the greatness of our depravity every day; and we cannot hide our eyes from the humiliating declaration. Were it possible to avoid the acknowledgment, we should certainly avoid it: but the truth is so obvious, and so undeniable, that we cannot escape.

The only exception to this remark proves the truth of the doctrine still more strongly. The man, whose Conscience does not thus testify, is plainly of a *peculiarly* depraved character; not merely because his Conscience does not thus testify, but because he is always guilty of gross sin in various other respects. So common, or rather so universal, is this fact, as to become the subject of proverbial remark. He therefore, who is thus situated, is still more depraved than mankind in general.

3dly. *The Stupidity of mankind, and their Hardness of Heart, are strong exhibitions of the same doctrine.*

That Men should be thus guilty, and yet be insensible to the nature and degree of their depravity, is an event, certainly not to have been expected from the Reason, of which we so continually boast. Our sins are committed against the Infinite God, the eternal and unchangeable Enemy of Sin; and are, therefore, the means of exposing us in an awful manner to his wrath and vengeance. At the same time, the character is in itself debased, deformed, and hateful, beyond expression. Who, then, can be supposed to possess any share of Reason, and not be humbled beyond measure at the latter of these considerations, and equally alarmed by the former? Yet Mankind by nature are universally, not only not humbled, but haughty; not only not alarmed, but stupid, as to their danger; and cheerful, gay, exulting, and insolent, in the career of their iniquity.

In the mean time, no warnings are sufficient to awaken them to a sense of guilt, danger, or duty; no counsels, to persuade them to return to obedience; no motives, to deter them from sin. The heart is, like the nether millstone, incapable of any useful, serious, divine, impression; daily becoming more and more guilty, stupid, and hardened; and wandering farther and farther from duty and from God, from hope and from Heaven.

Eternal Life is offered, and has been offered, to those, now be

fore me, ten thousand times. Who has accepted the offer? Their sins have been ten thousand times reproved and condemned. Who has repented, and forsaken them? Their duty has in countless instances been pressed upon them. Who has obeyed? God has called, Christ has entreated, the Spirit of Grace has striven. Who has listened, complied, and yielded? To continue in sin is to be exposed to endless misery. To repent, and turn to God, is to secure endless life. Every hardened, impenitent sinner declares, therefore, that, in his view, sin, with endless misery for its reward, is more to be chosen than holiness, or obedience, with endless life. What greater proof of dreadful depravity can be given, or demanded?

III. *The same doctrine is most affectingly evinced by the whole course of human conduct.*

This evidence will advantageously appear,

1st. *From the Private Conduct of mankind, as individuals.*

I shall not here insist at large on the most private and retired scenes of life, where we see, in multitudes of instances, notwithstanding all the concealment and disguise, with which Vice hides itself from the observation of the world, innumerable forms and degrees of corruption acted out in a very painful and humiliating manner. In spite of the veil, which night and solitude cast over the innumerable perpetrations of the human race, how many kinds of deformity rise up daily to our view! How many early, bitter, and unnatural contentions, even of little children! What affecting tokens even of infantine selfishness, wrath, revenge, and cruelty! How many proofs of filial impiety, ingratitude, and rebellion, in the morning of Life! What unbrotherly and unsisterly coldness and alienation, what unkind and unforgiving hearts, appear in those, *who are bone of the same bone, and flesh of the same flesh!* How many jealous, hard-hearted, little, base sentiments and actions afflict the bosom of parental tenderness in those, whom nature makes inexpressibly beloved, in spite of every fault, as well as of every folly!

What a task is it to rear a single family, without leaving such faults unextirpated, as are open and infamous! How vast a labour to train up even one child to virtue and to duty; or even to prevent one from becoming grossly sinful, and finally lost! What toils and pains; what cares and watchings; how many reproofs, restraints, and corrections; how many prayers, and sighs, and tears, are employed and suffered, before this hard task can be accomplished! How rarely is it accomplished at all! What then must be the corruption of that heart, which makes all these efforts necessary; and which can resist and overcome them all?

From this summary view let us turn our thoughts to the *obvious* conduct of men; as it exists in our own and every other country. What *amazing selfishness* visibly appears in the general conduct of mankind; and how little are they, amidst all the culture of education and humanity, all the restraints of Law, and all the illuminations,

injunctions, and threatenings, of Religion, disposed to act agreeably to the dictates of truth, righteousness, and benevolence towards each other? A little property, a little power, a very humble office, or some other trifling object of ambition, will, at any time, make those, who have been for life bosom friends, vehement and irreconcileable enemies. A furious and long continued lawsuit is resorted to, in order to decide the unsettled property; a lawsuit, carried on with bitterness, fraud, and perjury; and terminated in insolent victory and sullen defeat, in riveted hatred and gloomy retaliation. The place of honour and power is sought for with electioneering, caballing, slander, fraud, and falsehood; and is enjoyed with insolence, or lost with envy, malice, and secret resolutions of future revenge.

In the common bargains between Men, how rarely is it the design to exchange an equivalent for that which is received; although the only possible rule of honesty; and how generally, to make what is called a *good*, and what is in reality a *fraudulent*, bargain! How perpetual are the efforts to impose on our neighbours commodities of less than the professed value; commodities imperfect, corrupted, and decayed! How many persons obtain their whole living, and spend their whole lives, in this kind of fraud! What pains are also taken to conceal, or belie, the state of the markets; of our own circumstances; our real intentions; or our ability to fulfil the engagements, into which we enter! What base deceptions are practised in cases of bankruptcy; and what frauds perpetrated, in order to attain legally the character, and immunities, of a bankrupt! How difficult has it been even to make a Law, which can at all secure to creditors an equitable share in the actual remains of a bankrupt's property! How strange would the observations, which I am now making, appear in a world of honest, virtuous beings!

Friendship is plainly one of the things, most to be looked for among rational beings; as it is one of the most profitable, and most pleasing, of all those, which are in our power. To this union of affections, this perpetual correspondence of hearts, this delightful harmony of life, all our interests strongly lead us, with motives highly noble and affectingly persuasive. Yet *Solomon* could say, and with plain propriety could say, *A faithful man who can find?* Not a small part of our conversation, or of our writings, is filled with bitter complaints of frail, alloyed, treacherous, broken friendship; and of unworthy, false, and perfidious friends. Why are we not friends? Can Virtue furnish any part of the reason?

The pleasures of Men, their darling and customary pleasures, have ever seemed to me an affecting proof of extreme depravity in our nature.

St. James directs, *Is any man afflicted, let him pray. Is any merry*, (that is, cheerful) *let him sing psalms.* In other words, let the hours of cheerfulness be spent innocently, (for such is the employment recommended) gratefully to God, and profitably to ourselves.

Such are the amusements, such the pleasures, recommended by an Apostle.

In examining the pleasures, actually sought by mankind, I shall, without any particular notice, pass by the brutal entertainments, so greedily sought, so highly enjoyed, and so firmly established, under the sanctions of law, in *Greece*, *Rome*, and other Heathen countries: the public games, in which naked men contended for superiority in feats of agility and strength; the gladiatorial shows, in which men, trained for the purpose, butchered each other for the amusement of their fellow-men; and the exposures of human beings to the fury of wild beasts, while thousands enjoyed the sport of seeing them torn asunder, as a mere entertainment. I will not dwell upon the fact, that, beside the vulgar and the savage, men of high rank, of enlightened minds, and of polished manners, and, what is still more humiliating and disgusting, women of the first birth, education, and character, were regularly present. I will pass by the *Saturnalia*, in which *Rome* sunk, for a week every year, into the coarsest and most vulgar brutism, and all distinction and decency were abolished. Useful as the investigation might be, it must, for the want of time, be omitted on the present occasion.

Let me then ask, What are the actual pleasures, usually sought with eager favouritism in countries, claiming the title of Christian? Go to *the table*, where *provision is* professedly *made for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof;* and you will find one answer to the question. What a circle is very frequently seated around it! Or rather, what does that circle in many instances become, before the table is deserted? To pass the enormous expense, care, and anxiety, with which nature and art are employed and ransacked, to gratify the demands of a sickly and fastidious palate; in how many instances, throughout even the civilized and Christian world, is a feast the mere resort of gluttony and drunkenness! How swinishly are the overflowing bounties of the Infinite God abused to the prostitution of Man; to the destruction of his health, the waste of his time, the perversion of his talents, the neglect of his duty, the corruption of his heart, the stupefaction of his reason, the loss of his usefulness, and the ruin of his Soul! How many drunkards, think you, My Brethren, have been found in a single century, the most enlightened and improved, since the beginning of the world, and in the countries inhabited by Christians, around the festive boards of the well-informed and polished members of society? How many more gluttons? What a scene of low and vulgar brutism, at the same time, is daily presented by taverns, ale-houses, and dram-shops; and on days of public rejoicing and festivity!

Turn we hence to *the Horse-race;* another darling diversion of mankind; and not of the ignorant and clownish only, but of the enlightened and polished; nay, even of the noble and dignified,

ranks of men. What has gathered the concourse? The professed object is to see two or more horses run a race, and one outstrip the other in his speed. Without calling in question the lawfulness of setting these animals upon the stretch of their powers for our amusement: what a picture is presented to our view by the bets which are laid, the fraud and falsehood practised; the perjuries, oaths, curses, and blasphemies, uttered; the drunkenness and sloth, which are indulged; the battles, which are fought; and the universal prostitution of morals, which is accomplished.

At *a Cockpit*, another darling scene of amusement to vast multitudes of mankind, all these gross and dreadful iniquities abound; together with a cruelty causeless, shameless, and horrid; a cruelty impossible to that *righteous man, who is merciful to his beast*, and of course to every harmless creature in his power.

Of the same deplorable nature is the amusement of *Bull-baiting*: an amusement warranted by the voice of law, and the deliberate decisions of senatorial wisdom and royal dignity. The strength and courage of this animal are here made the very means of torturing him with the most exquisite agonies, which can easily be devised: all not only quietly suffered, but established, for the sake of guarding the palate of the epicure from offence and disappointment, on the one hand; and on the other, for the purpose of slaking the thirst for pleasure in minds, which can find delight in ferocity, anguish, and death.

From these humiliating scenes, direct your steps to *the Gaming table*. I need not tell you how chosen a diversion, or set of diversions, is found here; or to what an incomprehensible extent sought in every country, civilized and savage. Here, fraud in every form begins, carries on, and closes, the business. Here, is the chamber of moroseness, gloom, discontent, animosity, profaneness, contention, drunkenness, and universal depravity. Here, property is wickedly lost, and wickedly won. Here, time is most shamefully and sinfully wasted. Here, all duties are most dreadfully neglected; and here, the estate, the health, the character, the family, and the soul, are consigned to perdition.

From the gaming table turn your researches next to *the Theatre*. Think, first, of *the almost uniform character* of the miserable wretches, who are trained to create the diversion. How low are they, almost without an exception, fallen; and how low do they fall, of course, by the deplorable employment, to which they are most wickedly tempted to devote themselves! If you are at a loss, read a history, or even a professed panegyric, of this class of mankind. You will find it filled up with crimes, which disgrace the name even of sinful Man; and with characters, which are a blot even on this guilty world. Consider, next, *the Performances*, which these unhappy men and women are employed to exhibit. How few can be read without a blush, or without a sigh, by a person, not seduced by habit, or not lost to virtue, and even to sobriety!

How great a part are mere means of pollution! What art, labour, and genius, are engaged in them to garnish gross and dreadful vice; to disguise its nature and effects; to robe it in the princely attire of virtue; and to crown it with the rewards of well-doing! How often is even common decency insulted, ridiculed, and put to flight! In how many ways, and with how much art, is corruption softly and secretly instilled into the soul! In how many instances is Virtue defaced, dishonoured, and, like the Saviour of Mankind, crowned with thorns, sceptered with a reed, and mocked with pretended and insolent homage!

Turn your eyes, next, to *the Audience*, whose wishes and property give birth to the whole establishment. Of whom is this audience composed? Of how few persons, whom Virtue ever knew, or with whom she would not blush to confess her acquaintance! Of how many, who are strangers to all good! Of how many, who are ignorant even of decency; to whom vice is pleasing, and grossness an entertainment!

Accordingly, all the course of exhibition, except a little part thrust in as a sacrifice to decency and reputation, is formed of polluted sentiments, and polluted characters; in which whatever is not directly and openly abominable is meant merely as the white covering intended to shroud from the eye the death and rottenness within. Our own copious language, employed in thousands of dramatic performances, probably cannot boast of a sufficient number of such plays, as an Apostle would have pronounced innocent, to furnish a single stage for a single season.

From the Stage, men are directly prepared to go to *the Brothel*. The corruption of the one fits the mind with no common preparation to direct its course to the other.

One of the first facts, which here strikes, and afflicts, the thinking mind, is, that these houses of pestilence and ruin, of sin and perdition, are tolerated in countries, inhabited, and ruled by such as profess themselves to be Christians, by those who have been *baptized into the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*. Another is, that they are frequented by vast multitudes: and another, that these are not composed of the low, ignorant, and despised only; but, in great numbers, of the wealthy, the enlightened, the polite, and even the noble and the princely. To this we must add, because truth adds, that Seduction has in all instances begun the ruin of the miserable wretches, who inhabit these walls of *Sodom*. This seduction, also, has been accomplished by art, falsehood, serpentine insidiousness, and outrageous perjury. The endless ruin of a soul has been the price of a momentary and debased gratification; and the poor and pitiable victim has been solicited, and induced, to sacrifice eternal Life, to the fiend-like persuasion of her betrayer.

In the mean time, all, or nearly all, those, who are authors of the deception, or haunters of these tenements of prostitution, ac-

company to the same perdition the miserable victims of their treachery. Of *the strange* or polluted *woman*, God saith, *None, that go in unto her, turn again; neither take they hold of the paths of life.*

Another fact, to which your attention is called in these dreadful scenes, is, that here all sin springs up as in a hot-bed; that, beside the horrid debasement, which is here the characteristical guilt, all possible sin is rank, luxuriant, and prosperous. Profaneness, drunkenness, treachery, fraud, and murder, haunt these baleful walls, as a collection of infernal beings in a second Hell. Like that dreadful world, also, its doors are barred against all return and repentance, against life and hope. Scarcely an example is found, in which those, who have once entered, ever make their escape. *Sin* and *Perdition* are marked on the gateway; and over the door is read, in letters of fire, *This house is the way to Hell, going down to the chambers of Death.*

The last subject, which, in this complicated mass of iniquity, demands your investigation, *is the immense extent of the pollution, and the incomprehensible numbers of mankind which it involves, and has ever involved.* A Prophet has recorded *Sodom*, as a monument of eternal infamy. Were prophets to exist in every land, *Sodoms* would not improbably be portrayed on many pages of every historical record. The great Capitals of most *European* and *Asiatic* countries are, in many respects, perhaps, not a whit behind the impurity, found in those monuments of the divine vengeance, *the Cities of the plain.* I wish I could say our own had a less share in this charge. Modern lewdness, although usually concealed with care from the eye of the world, has yet publicly proceeded to lengths, which amaze the mind even of cool contemplation, sicken the heart of delicacy, and turn back the eye of virtue with horror. The world has become complaisant to it; and changed its very language, to give soft and imposing names to the wretches, who have robbed the swine of their sty, or wallowed at their side in the mire. The prostitute is misnamed with softening appellations, intended to veil her odious character, and her enormous crimes. The lewd man is styled a man of gayety, spirit, and life; a man of the world; a liberal man; a man unshackled by fanaticism or superstition.

At the same time, means innumerable, tolerated by law, and pursued with impunity, are employed to cherish this worst, this most fatal, of all evils. Houses of pollution in immense numbers are erected, allowed, and frequented. Abandoned women are brought forward to places of public and honourable resort; admitted without opposition to assemblies for amusement, made up of those, who fill the upper spheres of life; seated at tables of distinction; and rolled on the wheels of splendour. Genius prostitutes its elevated powers to seduce the miserable victim, to varnish the guilt of pollution, to sooth to torpor the wounded conscience, and

to make the way to Hell smooth, pleasant, and unsuspected; forms and tunes the enchanting song, to imbrute the heedless mind; fashions and animates the marble into every form of temptation: traces on the canvass its lines of symmetry and beauty, and sheds the splendour of its colouring, only to corrupt and to ruin. The shop, to complete the havoc, publicly holds out the infamous book, the alluring image, and the fascinating picture, to every passenger; and, in defiance of laws and magistrates, eagerly helps forward the work of destruction.

All these are chosen, and customary pursuits of mankind. Those, who follow them, are immortal beings, who have souls to be saved, sins to be forgiven, and endless life to be secured. All of them have heard the Gospel of Salvation; have been exhorted to yield themselves to the Redeemer; and have been earnestly invited to enter into heaven.

The life of all is a vapour; the day of grace and of pardon, is bounded by that momentary life; and each feels his time to be so short, that he cannot find even an hour to employ on the great work of Repentance, and the Salvation of his soul.

Such, then, are *the pleasures* of mankind. What, it may now be asked, are those employments of men, which wear a more serious aspect?

Among these, the first, which strikes the mind of a serious investigator, is *their general and wonderful profanation of the name of God.* To this sin, it is generally acknowledged, there is hardly any temptation. Wickedness here assumes, therefore, the character of disinterestedness; and the sin is committed from the pure love of sinning. Yet how immensely extensive is this evil practice! The Heathen and the Mohammedan, the Jewish and the Christian nations, professing widely different views, in other respects, concerning the Ruler of all things, quietly unite in profaning his awful name. Men of all ages and characters, however discordant otherwise, harmonize here. The sage and the blockhead, the gentleman and the clown, the nobleman and the peasant, join their voices in unison; and form one great chorus, not for the praise, but for the dishonour, of God. The Prince swears on his throne, and the beggar on his dunghill; the child lisps out the imperfect curse, and the tongue of the man of grey hairs trembles beneath the faltering blasphemy. From *California* to *Japan* the general voice of mankind rises up to Heaven, not *as the odour of sweet incense*, but as one vast exhalation of impiety, infinitely disgraceful to our reason, immensely ungrateful, and immensely wicked.

The next dreadful effusion of this evil spirit is the *multiform falsehood*, which in such an astonishing manner clouds and disgraces this miserable world. Truth is the foundation of all virtue, and consequently of all happiness. Without it, society, in the proper sense, cannot exist. Even the dreadful bands of thieves

and ruffians are proverbially acknowledged to be indebted to it for their own horrid union. But cast your eyes over this wide world, and mark how extensively *truth has fallen in the streets* of cities, the solitary habitations of the country, and the wild retreats of the savage and barbarian. Mark how soon falsehood begins to blacken the tongue of the child, and how greatly to deepen its hue with the increase of years. Trace, if you can, without intense mortification, the secret windings of the private slanderer; and behold, if you can, without amazement, in endless multitudes, the impudent, unblushing lies of public newspapers. Survey with horror, for without horror you cannot survey, the perjuries of testimony, the perjuries of elections, the perjuries of the custom-house, and the perjuries of public office. Look with still more amazement and regret, on the falsehoods of the great and powerful. "Truth," said *King John of France*, "if banished from the rest of the world, ought still to find a mansion in the bosoms of princes." Yet how regularly from year to year, and from century to century, courts and legislatures assert, and deny, successively, the same facts, without a retraction, and without a blush. Cast your eyes, and tell me, if they do not sicken while you cast them, on the mountainous mass of falsehood heaped up by insidious Learning, and infidel philosophy, against the Word of God, and against all the interests, virtue, and happiness, of Man. When you have done these things; finish the humiliating investigation by gazing at the whole nation of the *French*, swearing eternal hatred to royalty and eternal fealty to six successive constitutions of Government, adopted within little more than six successive years, and then bowing down quietly at the foot of a despot!

From falsehood the transition is almost necessary to *fraud*. On this subject, however, as on all the remaining ones, I can dwell but a moment. The laws of all civilized nations have been chiefly employed in repressing this sin, and in repressing it with every suffering, which ingenuity could devise, or human nature sustain. Yet in spite of the whip, the brand, the prison, and the galley, in spite of the gibbet and the cross, the rack and the faggot, what commodity, what kind of dealing, is not the subject of fraud; and what child of *Adam* is not its mortified object? All kinds of money are counterfeited; all kinds of instruments for conveyance, or security, are forged. Vast multitudes of mankind gain their livelihood from cheating. The beggar cheats you in his tale of suffering; the man of business in his commodity; the statesman plunders the public; the prince defrauds his subjects by false representations of his wants, and false representations of his expenditures. In *London* only, a very corrupt, but far from being the most corrupt, city in *Europe*, 115,000 human beings, among whom are 50,000 abandoned females, live, according to the sagacious and upright Colquhoun, either partly or wholly, by customary fraud; and annually plunder their fellow-men of Two millions Sterling; while on the River

Thames a more systematized robbery has yearly wrested from individuals no less than 500,000 pounds of the same currency; and from the Crown, during a century, ten millions.

Duelling and Suicide present to our view two other kindred testimonies of enormous corruption. On these, however, I cannot, and need not, dwell. Instead of expatiating on them, I will exhibit to you two official accounts of the moral state of the Capital of *France*. By a public return to the Government, of births, deaths, &c. in *Paris*, in the year 1801, it appears, that there were,

Legitimate births, ...	14,829	
Illegitimate, ...	4,841	About one quarter of the whole.
Marriages, ...	3,826	
Divorces, ...	720	About one sixth of the whole.
Died in their own houses, . .	12,510	
In poor houses and hospitals, .	8,257	About two fifths of
Found dead in the streets, . . .	201	the whole.

In the Republican year, ending Sept. 23, 1803, by the report of *the Prefect of Police* to *the Grand Judge for the District of Paris*, the number of

Suicide was	Men, .	490	657
	Women,	167	
Murdered persons, . . .	Men, .	81	150
	Women,	69	
Divorces, ...			644
Murderers executed, ...			155
Condemned to the galleys, ...			1210
Condemned to hard labour and imprisonment, .			1626
Branded with hot irons, ...			64

Among the criminals executed were *Seven Fathers*, who had poisoned their children: *Ten Husbands*, who had murdered their wives: *Six wives*, who poisoned their husbands: and *Fifteen children*, who destroyed their parents.

During that year also 12,076 lewd women had been registered, and paid for the protection of the Police; 1552 kept mistresses were noted; and 308 public brothels licensed, by the Prefect of Police at Paris.

This tremendous recital admits no comment. The spectator shrinks from it with horror; and, forced to acknowledge those, comprised in the story, to be *human beings*, wishes to deny, that himself is *a man*.

2dly. *The doctrine is dreadfully evinced in the Public Conduct of mankind.*

On this part of the subject, copious and important as it is, I shall make a very few observations only, under the following heads.

1st. *Their government.*

Under a righteous administration of Government, the intense corruption of the human character is gloomily manifested *by Subjects*, in the violation of their allegiance, and their evasions or their transgressions of Law. God has made it our duty to *render tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; and honour to whom honour.* Nor has He permitted us to perform these duties with less scrupulous exactness than any other. Compare with this precept the reluctant payment of reasonable taxes; the unceasing, and immense, smuggling; the innumerable frauds, practised on the Custom-house; the murmurings, the seditions, the revolts, the malignant factions, and the furious civil discords, which have blackened the annals even of the freest and happiest nations; and you cannot want evidence of the depravity of that spirit, which has given birth to these enormities.

On the other hand, how often is the *Government* itself no other than an administration of iniquity! The endless train of evils, however, which have flowed in upon mankind from this source, have been, here, so long the ruling theme both of conversation and writings; the oppression, fraud, plunder, baleful example, and deplorable corruption, of despotic princes, have been so thoroughly learned by heart; as to render a particular discussion of them, at the present time, unnecessary. But however frequently they have been repeated, they are not on that account less real, or dreadful, manifestations of human turpitude. I know, that it is a common refuge of the objectors to this doctrine to attribute both these kinds of evidence of human corruption to the form of the government, and not to the nature of Man. But this complaisance to human nature is out of place. Kings and princes are mere men; and differ from other men, only because they are surrounded by greater temptations. Their nature and propensities are precisely the same with yours and mine. Their opportunities of doing good are, at the same time, immensely greater; and were they originally virtuous, would be seized, and employed, with an avidity, proportioned to their extent, for this great purpose only. Were human nature pure, as is professed; were it not dreadfully corrupted; kings would be the best of men; as possessing the greatest power, and the widest means of beneficence. How unlike this has been the fact, not with respect to kings only, but almost all men invested with high authority. Republican Legislatures have been at least as oppressive to mankind as Monarchs; particularly to the dependencies of their empire. *Rome and Sparta* ground their provinces with a harder hand than the *Persian Despot;* and no human tyranny was ever marked with such horrors as the Republican tyranny of *France.*

2dly. *The Wars of Mankind are a still more dreadful exhibition of wickedness than their Government.*

Here, as if the momentary life of Man was too long, and his sufferings too few, and too small, men have professedly embarked in the design of cutting off life, and enhancing the number and degree of sufferings. War has prevailed through every age, and in every country; and in all has waded through human blood, trampled on human corpses, and laid waste the fields and the dwellings, the happiness and the hopes, of mankind. It has been employed to empty Earth, and people Hell; to make Angels weep, and Fiends triumph, over the deplorable guilt and debasement of the human character.

3dly. *The doctrine is not less strongly evidenced by the Religion of Mankind.*

With this subject I shall wind up the melancholy detail. JEHOVAH created this world, stored it with the means of good, and filled it with rational and immortal beings. Instead of loving, serving, and adoring Him, they have worshipped Devils, the vilest of all beings, and alike his enemies and their own. They have worshipped each other; they have worshipped brutes; they have worshipped vegetables. The Smith has molten a god of gold; the Carpenter has hewn a god of wood; and millions have prostrated themselves to both in praise and prayer. To appease the anger of these gods, they have attempted to wash their sins away by ablutions, and to make atonement for them by penance. To these gods they have offered up countless hecatombs; and butchered, and tortured, and burnt, their own children. Before these gods their religion has enjoined, and sanctioned, the unlimited prostitution of matrons and virgins to casual lust and systematized pollution. The same religion has also sanctioned war and slaughter, plunder and devastation, fraud and perjury, seduction and violation, without bounds. Its persecutions have reddened the world with blood, and changed its countries into catacombs. On *the pale horse*, seen in the Apocalyptic vision, *Death* has gone before it; *and Hell following after*, has exulted in its deplorable follies, its crimes without number, and the miseries, which it has occasioned without end.

SERMON XXXII.

HUMAN DEPRAVITY; DERIVED FROM ADAM.

ROMANS v. 12.—*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.*

FROM these words I proposed, in a former discourse, to discuss the following Doctrine:

That in consequence of the Apostacy of Adam all men have sinned.

In the three last discourses, I have considered *the Universality and the Degree, of human corruption.* The next subject of our inquiry is *the Source, whence this corruption is derived.* In the text, as well as in the doctrine, it is exhibited as existing in consequence of the Apostacy of *Adam.*

Before I proceed to a direct examination of this branch of the doctrine, it will be advantageous to make a few preliminary observations.

1st. *It will, I presume, be admitted, that there is a cause of this depravity.*

The Depravity of Man is either caused, or casual. If it be casual; every thing else may, for aught that appears, be casual also. A denial of this position, therefore, becomes a direct establishment of the Atheistical scheme of casual existence.

Besides, uniformity, is, in all cases, a complete refutation of the supposition of casualty. That mere accident should be the parent of the same moral character in all the progeny of *Adam*, or of uniformity of any kind, in so many thousand millions of cases, is contradictory to plain mathematical certainty.

2dly. *This cause, whatever it is, is commensurate with its effects.*

As, therefore, the effects extend to all men; it follows, that the cause, also, is universal.

3dly. *The cause of this depravity is undoubtedly one, and the same.*

This is argued, irresistibly, from *the nature of the effects*, which is every where the same.

4thly. *This cause did not always exist.*

Before their Apostacy, our first parents were undepraved. As the effect did not then exist; the cause plainly did not exist.

These observations must, I think, be admitted without a controversy. It follows, therefore, that in searching for the source of human corruption we must, if we act wisely, be guided by them: since nothing can be this source, of which all these things cannot be truly predicated.

5thly. *In inquiring after the source of human corruption we inquire only after a fact.*

This subject, sufficiently difficult in itself, has been almost always embarrassed by uniting with it foreign considerations. *A fact*, it ought ever to be remembered, *is what it is, independently of every thing else.* If it be true, that the corruption of Mankind exists in consequence of the Apostacy of *Adam;* this truth cannot be affected by any reluctance in us to admit it; by any opinions, which we may form, of the propriety, or impropriety, of the dispensation; nor by any inexplicableness, arising from the efficient cause, the moral nature, or the consequences, of the fact. These things may be the foundation of other inquiries, and of perplexities, and difficulties, ever so great: still, they cannot even remotely affect the subject of the present investigation.

6thly. *When I assert, that in consequence of the Apostacy of Adam all men have sinned; I do not intend, that the posterity of Adam are guilty of his transgression.*

Moral actions are not, so far as I can see, transferable from one being to another. The personal act of any agent is, in its very nature, the act of that agent solely; and incapable of being participated by any other agent. Of course, the guilt of such a personal act is equally incapable of being transferred, or participated. The guilt is inherent in the action; and is attributable, therefore, to the Agent only.

So clear is this doctrine, that, I presume, no evidence was ever supposed to be derived, originally, from Reason, to the contrary doctrine. If, therefore, any evidence can be found to support this doctrine, it must be found in Revelation. But in Revelation, it is presumed, it cannot be found. Unquestionably it is no where directly asserted in the Scriptures. If it be contained in them, it must be by implication. Let me ask, Where is this implication? Certainly not in any use of the term *Impute*, commonly appealed to by the supporters of this scheme. I have examined with care every passage, in which this word, and its connexions, are used in the Scriptures; and feel completely assured, that it is used in a totally different sense, in every instance, without an exception. The Verb λογιζομαι, which is the original word, rendered by the English word *impute*, denotes originally, and always, *to reckon, to count, to reckon to the account of a man, to charge to his account;* but never to transfer moral action, guilt, or desert, from one being to another. Thus it is said by *Shimei, Let not my Lord impute this sin unto his servant:* that is, Let not my Lord charge my sin of cursing *David* against me, or to my account. Thus also it is said, *Abraham believed God; and it was counted to him for righteousness:* that is, his faith was reckoned to him in the stead of that perfect legal righteousness, in the possession of which he would have been accepted before God.

The passage, which seems the nearest to the purpose of those,

against whom I am contending, is 1 Cor. xv. 22, *As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.* The words in the original are ἐν τῷ Ἀδαμ and ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ. The Greek preposition Ἐν signifies very often, as any person acquainted with the language must have observed, exactly the same thing with the English phrase *by means of.* The passage would, therefore, have been explicitly and correctly translated, *as by means of Adam all die, even so by means of Christ shall all be made alive. Adam* is, therefore, only asserted, here, to be an instrumental cause of the Death specified. A parallel passage will, I think, make the justice of these remarks evident beyond any reasonable debate. In 1 Cor. vii. 14, it is said, *the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband.* No person will pretend, that in this passage the Apostle declares the sanctification of the believing wife to be transferred to the husband, so as to become the personal state, or character, of the husband. This is evidently not the fact, because he is still an unbeliever. The meaning plainly is, that *by means of his wife he is in such a sense considered as sanctified, as to prevent his children from being unclean;* or in more explicit terms, *from being incapable of being offered to God in baptism.*

7th. *Neither do I intend, that the descendants of Adam are punished for his transgression.*

This doctrine is completely set aside by God himself, in Ezek. xviii. 20: *The soul that sinneth it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father; neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him; and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.* In this passage it is, I think, as explicitly as language will admit, declared, that *no man shall be punished for the sin of another;* particularly that *the son shall not be punished for the sin of his father; and, by obvious, and, I think, irresistible implication, that the sons of Adam shall not be punished for the sins of this, their common, parent.*

Having thus prepared the way, as I conceive, for the direct discussion of the doctrine, I shall now proceed to adduce in support of its truth the following proofs.

I. *The Text.*

Here it is asserted, that *by one man sin entered into the world;* δι' ἑνος ἀνθρωπου; *through, or by means of, one man.* I will not take upon to me to say, that the Apostle declares the sin of *Adam* to be the only supposable, or possible, cause of the entrance of sin into the world; but he plainly declares it to be the actual cause. The sin, which thus entered, he declares also to be universal; even as universal, as the death, which entered by sin. In the 18th verse, which is separated from the text by a parenthesis only, the Apostle teaches us in the most direct terms, that this universal sin is a consequence of the transgression of *Adam.* His words are, *Therefore,*

as by the offence of one, or as in the original, δι' ενος παραπτωματος, *by one offence, judgment came upon all to condemnation;* and in the 19th verse, *By one man's disobedience, many*, in the original, οι πολλοι *the many, were made*, in the Greek, κατεσταθησαν *were constituted, sinners.* The meaning of these passages is, I think, plainly the following: that by means of the offence, or transgression of *Adam*, the judgment, or sentence of God, came upon all men unto condemnation; because, and solely because, all men, in that state of things, which was constituted in consequence of the transgression of *Adam*, became sinners.

I have heretofore declared, that *the manner, in which the state of things became such, is not at all involved in the present discussion.* I now observe further, that I am unable to explain this part of the subject. Many attempts have been made to explain it; but I freely confess myself to have seen none, which was satisfactory to me; or which did not leave the difficulties as great, and, for aught I know, as numerous, as they were before. I shall not add to these difficulties by any imperfect explanations of my own. At the same time, I repeat, that the fact in question is not at all affected by these difficulties; and that a denial of this fact is perplexed with difficulties, which are greater, both in number and degree.

II. *The Doctrine is evident, also, from the Sentence pronounced on our first parents.*

In this sentence God declared, that *the ground was cursed for the sake of Adam*, or because of his transgression; *that it should bring forth thorns and thistles: that he should eat bread in the sweat of his brow;* and *that both he and his wife should lead lives of toil, suffering, and sorrow, until they should finally return to the dust, from which they were taken.* In a former discourse it was shown, that all the parts of this sentence have been regularly fulfilled, from the beginning to the present day. All of them, therefore, constituted a sentence, actually pronounced on all the progeny of *Adam*, and proved to be so, because *it is executed on them all. The cursing of the ground*, particularly, by which it was deprived of its former spontaneous fruitfulness, and condemned to perpetual sterility; by which thorns and briars were substituted for the fruits of Paradise; and by which ease, happiness, and immortality, were exchanged for labour, suffering, and death, inwrought into the very constitution, now given to the Earth; was a fact, which involved, of course, the punishment of all men; because all men suffer distress by means of this fact; and because no rational beings, beside sinners, are in the Providence of God subjected to any suffering. Every descendant of *Adam* must, of course, be an inhabitant of the world, which was thus cursed; and must of necessity be a partaker of the very evils, denounced in this curse. When the sentence was declared, therefore, it was certainly foreseen, that all those, who would afterwards share in the sufferings, which it disclosed; that is, all the children of *Adam;* would be sinners. As

all the progeny of *Adam* must inhabit the world thus cursed; all must necessarily partake of these evils; because they were inseparably united to the world, in which they dwelt. If, then, it was not foreseen, that they would be sinners; the curse must have been denounced against them, either when obedient and virtuous; or while their future moral character was uncertain. The former will not be admitted by any man: the latter will no more be admitted by any man, if he reflect at all on the subject: for God can no more be supposed to condemn, and punish, those, who are not known by him to be sinful, than those, who are known to be virtuous. It follows therefore, that, as the world was thus changed in consequence of the transgression of *Adam;* and of a paradise became a wilderness of thorns and briars: so, in consequence of the same transgression, the character of Man was also changed; and instead of being immortal, virtuous, and happy, he became the subject of sin, suffering, and death. With respect to one of these considerations, viz. the mortality of mankind, the Apostle *Paul* expressly asserts the doctrine in a passage, already quoted for another purpose. *In*, or by means of, *Adam*, *all die.* As neither death, nor any other suffering, befalls virtuous beings; this passage may be fairly considered as a full confirmation of the doctrine at large.

III. *The Doctrine is directly declared by Moses, when he informs us, that Adam begat a son in his own likeness.*

The meaning of the word *likeness*, that is, the meaning, intentionally attached to it by *Moses*, cannot, I think, be mistaken. In the first chapter of the same history he introduces God as saying, *Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness;* and subjoins, *so God created Man in his own image: in the image of God created he him.* In a former discourse I have shown, that the likeness, or image, here mentioned, is *the Moral image of God;* consisting, especially, *in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness;* as we are informed by *St. Paul.* After dwelling so particularly on the image of God, in which Man was created, and on the fact, that Man was created in this image; it cannot, I think, be questioned, that *Moses* intended to inform us, that *Seth* was begotten in the moral likeness of *Adam* after his apostacy; and sustained, from his birth, a moral character, similar to that, which his two brothers, *Cain* and *Abel*, also sustained. This view of the subject appears plainly to have been adopted by *Job*, when he asks, *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one:* (Job xiv. 4.) by *Bildad*, when he asks, *How then can Man be justified with God; or how can he be clean, that is born of a woman?* (xxv. 4.) by *David*, when he says, (Psalm li. 5.) *Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me:* and by *St. Paul*, when he says, *As we have borne the image of the earthy,* (*Adam*) *so we shall bear the image of the heavenly,* (*Adam*) (1 Cor. xv. 49.) But if *Seth, Cain and Abel*, derived their corruption from the Apostacy of their parents; then

it is true, not only that their corruption, but that of all mankind, exists in consequence of that Apostacy.

Accordingly, our Saviour declares universally, that, *that which is born of the flesh, is flesh;* and that, *that* only, *which is born of the Spirit*, or *born again, is spirit.* In this declaration he certainly teaches us, that *the fleshly character is inseparably connected with the birth of man:* it being an invariable attendant of that birth. In other words, every parent, as truly as *Adam*, begets children *in his own* moral *likeness.* It hardly needs to be observed, that the moral character, denoted, in this observation of our Saviour, by the term *flesh*, is a corrupt character. *The carnal*, or fleshly, *mind*, says *St. Paul, is enmity against God; not subject to his Law, neither indeed can be:* and again; *To be carnally*, or fleshly, *minded, is Death.* In the Original, the words in both passages are φρονημα της σαρκος, *the minding of the flesh:* the exercise of our thoughts and affections in that manner, which accords with the fleshly, or native character.

IV. *In exact accordance with this scriptural representation, the Doctrine is strongly evinced by the conduct of Children, as soon as they become capable of moral action.*

Children in the morning of life are, as was remarked in the preceding discourse, unquestionably amiable; more so in many respects than at any future period; that is, whenever they do not at some future period become the subjects of sanctification. Some children also, as we are taught in the Scriptures, are sanctified from the womb. Still even these in some degree, and all others in a greater degree, exhibit, from the dawn of moral action, evil affections, and evil conduct. They are rebellious, disobedient, unkind, wrathful, and revengeful. All of them are proud, ambitious, vain, and universally selfish. All of them, particularly, are destitute of piety to God; the first, and far the most important exercise of virtue. They neither love, fear, nor obey him; neither admire his divine excellence, nor are thankful for his unceasing loving kindness. Immense multitudes of them are taught these duties from the commencement of their childhood; yet they can be persuaded to perform them by no species of instruction, hitherto devised. A virtuous mind would, of course, from the mere knowledge of God; without any known law; without any other motive except what is found in his greatness, excellency, and goodness to us; admire and love, reverence and glorify, Him with all the heart. But no instance of this nature can be produced. I have been employed in the education of children and youth more than thirty years, and have watched their conduct with no small attention and anxiety. Yet among the thousands of children, committed to my care, I cannot say with truth, that I have seen *one*, whose native character I had any reason to believe to be virtuous; or whom I could conscientiously pronounce to be free from the evil attributes, mentioned above. In addition to this, it ought to be observed, that

no child, unspotted with sin, is mentioned in the records of History. This, I think, could not be, had the fact ever existed.

Mankind therefore, according to the language of the Psalmist, *are estranged from the womb, and go astray as soon as they be born.*

The opposers of the doctrine undertake to avoid the force of this argument *by attributing the corruption of children to example, and the propensity of human nature to Imitation.*

The power of Example I readily acknowledge to be great, and the propensity to Imitation, strong. I acknowledge, also, that from these sources we may derive a satisfactory explanation of many things, both good and evil, which are done in the world. Still, I apprehend, the objection is a very insufficient answer to the argument in question. For,

1st. *On beings, who are virtuously inclined, a good example ought certainly to have more power than an evil one.*

On beings, *neither virtuously nor viciously inclined*, virtuous and vicious examples must, of course, be equally influential; as on beings, *sinfully inclined*, it is acknowledged, sinful examples have an influence entirely preponderating. All this is evident, because virtuous beings must love virtuous conduct, and follow it; as much as vicious beings love, and follow, vicious conduct; and because neutral beings, if such are supposed to exist, can have no bias to either. If, then, mankind were virtuously inclined; they would follow, with a clear and universal preponderation, virtuous examples. If neither virtuously nor sinfully inclined; they would follow virtuous and sinful examples alike, and with an equal propensity to imitation. But neither of these facts is found in human experience. Virtuous examples, it is acknowledged, have some degree of influence; but all men know this influence to be exceedingly, and distressingly, small. This truth is seen every day, in every place, and in every person. Whence arises the superior influence of vicious example, but from the fact, that it is more pleasing to the human heart? In *Heaven* such example could have no influence.

2dly. *If the first men were virtuous; as the objection supposes all men to be by nature, and as according to the objection these must have been; there could have been no evil examples, and upon this plan no sin, in the world.*

Virtuous men, that is, men wholly virtuous, cannot exhibit an evil example. If, then, the first men were virtuous, their immediate successors had no vicious example to follow; and must, therefore, have been themselves virtuous. Of course, the example, which *they* set also, was only virtuous. Hence those, who followed them, must have been virtuous; and in like manner all their successors. Upon this plan, Sin could never have entered the world. But Sin is in the world; and is, and ever has been, the universally prevailing character of the human race. The objectors, therefore, are reduced by their scheme to this dilemma:

Either virtuous men set sinful examples; which is a plain contradiction; or men became sinful without sinful examples.

Should it be said, that after *Adam and Eve* apostatized, they corrupted their children by their own sinful example; who again corrupted theirs; and thus every generation became the means of corrupting those who followed them; and that in this manner the existence of a sinful character in mankind may be explained: I answer, that I readily admit the premises to a certain extent; but wholly deny the conclusion. *Adam* and *Eve*, speedily after their apostacy, that is, before they had children, became penitents. The example, therefore, which they exhibited to their children, was such as penitents exhibit; expressive of their abhorrence of sin, and of their humble obedience to God. Such an example penitents now exhibit: and such a one, without a question, they have always exhibited. But this example, preponderating greatly in favour of virtue, must have had substantially the same influence with one perfectly virtuous. Of course, the perfectly virtuous mind of *Adam's* children must by this example have been strongly biassed to virtue; and according to this scheme could not have failed of retaining their virtuous character. But this is plainly contrary to the fact. The descendants of *Adam*, of the first, and of every succeeding, generation, were evidently sinful beings; and in the course of ten generations became so universally and absolutely sinful, that, except *Noah* and his family, God destroyed them all by the Deluge. God himself declares concerning them, that *every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually; that it repented the* LORD, *that he had made Man upon the earth, and grieved him at his heart.* In vain, therefore, do we look for the proper influence of virtuous examples on *children, born virtuous*, among the early descendants of *Adam*.

If mankind are born with neutral characters, not inclined either to good or to evil, the difficulty will not be seriously lessened. In this case men ought now to be as generally virtuous as sinful; because this character furnishes exactly the same probability of the prevalence of virtue, as of sin. But no such equality has at any period of time existed. On the contrary, men are now, and ever have been, without an exception, sinners.

Uniform sin proves uniform tendency to sin: for nothing more is meant by tendency, in any case, but an aptitude in the nature of a thing to produce effects of a given kind. With this meaning only in view, we say, that it is the nature, or tendency, of an apple-tree to produce apples; and of a fig-tree to produce figs. In the same manner we must, I think, say, if we would say the truth, that it is the tendency, or nature, of the human heart to sin.

It is further objected, that the uniformity of sin in children, and therefore in all the human race, may be fairly explained *by the nature of Moral Agency.*

It is to be observed, that such, as make this objection, suppose

the Freedom of the Will to lie in self-determination; the liberty of indifference; and the liberty of contingency. By persons, who hold this scheme, a more unfortunate objection to the doctrine could not, I apprehend, have been easily devised.

If the freedom of the will is the freedom of Contingency; then plainly its volitions are all accidents; and certainly the chances, arithmetically considered, are as numerous in favour of virtuous volitions, as of sinful ones. There ought therefore, on this plan, to be, and ever to have been, as many absolutely virtuous persons in the world, as sinful. Plainly *all* ought not to be sinful.

If the freedom of the will is the freedom of Indifference; the same consequence ought to follow: for, if there be no bias in the mind towards either virtue or sin, at the time immediately preceding each of its volitions; and the freedom of each volition arises out of this fact; then certainly, there being no bias either way, the number of virtuous, and that of sinful, volitions must naturally be equal: and no cause can be assigned, why every man, independently of his renovation by the Spirit of God, should be sinful only.

If the Liberty of the Will consist in Self-determination; and the mind, without the influence of any motive, first wills that it will form a second volition; and this volition depends for its freedom on the existence of such a preceding one; then it is plain, that from these preceding volitions as many virtuous as sinful ones ought to be derived; because the preceding, or self-determining, volitions, are by the supposition, under no influence or bias from any cause whatever.

Thus it is evident, that according to all these suppositions there could be no preponderancy, much less an universality, of sin in the world. The state of facts is, therefore, contradictory to the objection, as supported by them all.

Further; the Freedom of Will, and consequently Moral Agency, in Man in this world, is the same with that of *the Spirits of just men made perfect* in Heaven; the same with that of Angels; the same with that of the Man Christ Jesus. Whence, then, does it come to pass, that the same moral agency leads, or influences, these beings universally to virtue, and men in this world universally to sin? This question the objectors are bound to answer.

V. *The last proof of the Doctrine, which I shall adduce at the present time, is the Death of Infants.*

A great part of mankind die in infancy, before they are, or can be, capable of moral action; in the usual meaning of that phrase. Their death is attended with all the apparent suffering, usually experienced by persons of riper age, and with such suffering, at least, as plainly is often intense. Their death is, also, an ordinance of God; a dispensation of his immediate government. The language of this dispensation cannot, I think, be mistaken; and its meaning cannot be that of approbation. It is also the language, literally, of the Curse, denounced against our first parents; and

the execution of that Sentence, so far as this world is concerned. So St. *Paul* has directly declared, *Death has passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. The wages of sin is death.* Death then, the fruit, or wages of sin, the punishment denounced against it in the original sentence, must, I think, be acknowledged to be indubitable evidence of the existence of depravity in every moral being; that is, every being capable of depravity; who is the subject of death.

It ought here to be remembered, that death arrests Infants in every form of distress and terror, in which it befalls persons of riper years. They, together with others, are swept away *by the immediate hand of God* in those various judgments, with which He awfully punishes Mankind. They are swept away by the silent, awful hand of the pestilence; are consumed by the conflagration; overwhelmed by the volcano; swallowed up by the earthquake; and wasted by the lingering agonies of famine. At the same time, they suffer, *from Mankind*, all the deplorable violence of war, and the unnatural cruelties of persecution.

With these facts in view, we are compelled to one of these conclusions; either that Infants are contaminated in their moral nature, and born in the likeness of apostate *Adam;* a fact irresistibly proved, so far as the most unexceptionable analogy can prove any thing, by the depraved moral conduct of every infant, who lives so long, as to be capable of moral action: or that God inflicts these sufferings on moral beings who are perfectly innocent. I leave the alternative to the choice of those, who object against this doctrine.

There are but two objections to this argument within my knowledge. The first is, *that beyond the grave Infants may be compensated for their sufferings by receiving superior degrees of happiness.* This Objection will be easily seen to be of no validity. It is certainly unnecessary for God to make Infants unhappy, here, in order to make them happy in any manner whatever, hereafter. Angels are made completely happy in heaven, without having suffered any preceding unhappiness. Plainly, Infants might be made happy, to any degree, in the same manner. But if the sufferings of Infants are unnecessary, then they are causeless, on the scheme of this Objection; and God is supposed to create so much misery, merely to compensate it by so much future enjoyment. I think this conduct will not, soberly, be attributed to the Creator; since it would plainly be disgraceful to any of his Intelligent creatures.

The second Objection is, *that God governs the Universe by General Laws; and that, in their operation, inequalities and evils ought to be expected.* There are two answers to this objection. The first is, that God cannot be supposed to establish any general law, which produces injustice; such as the suffering of virtuous beings must be acknowledged to be. The second is, *that this is itself a general law; extending probably to one third, or one fourth, of the*

human race. The dispensation therefore, and not the exceptions, is unequal and evil, according to this scheme. Surely the difficulty is not lessened by such a supposition.

It will probably be farther said, *that so many difficulties attend this part of the doctrine, as to perplex, and distress, the mind no less than the suppositions already refuted.* The difficulties, attending the existence of Moral Evil are, I readily acknowledge, very great, and they easily become very distressing; whatever scheme of thought we may adopt concerning this subject; that is, if we pursue it to any extent. But, I apprehend, the chief of those difficulties, which necessarily attend us, will be found to lie in *the Fact, that Moral Evil exists.* To these we may, or may not, as we please, add others, found in the particular scheme of doctrine, which we choose to adopt. The doctrine, asserted in this discourse, is, I think, unanswerably supported by Revelation, and by Facts. Of Course, it adds to the original difficulties, inherent in the existence of Moral Evil, no new ones of its own. The schemes, which I am opposing, contain, on the contrary, a new series of embarrassments, beside those, which are common to them and to the doctrine of this discourse. The truth is, the subject of Moral Evil is too extensive, and too mysterious, to be comprehended by our Understanding. Some things, the Scriptures teach us concerning it; and these are usually furnished with important evidence from facts. Many other things, pertaining to this subject, lie wholly beyond our reach. What we can know, it is our duty, and our interest, to know. Where knowledge is unattainable, it is both our duty and interest to trust humbly and submissively to the instructions of Him, who is THE ONLY WISE.

But in this so difficult and perplexing dispensation there is nothing more absolutely inexplicable, than in many others, which, because we are less interested in them, we generally consider as scarcely mysterious at all. I will mention one, out of very many. The *state of the Animal world*, generally, is such, as to baffle all human investigation. *Why most animals exist at all, and why any of them are unhappy;* are subjects, which defy and silence, the most ingenious inquiries of Man. Nor is it originally strange, that the dispensations of a Being, *whose ways are above ours, as the heavens are higher than the earth,* should be incomprehensible, and inexplicable, by *us.*

It ought to be here remembered, that that, which *is true*, is not affected by any difficulty whatever, so far as its truth merely is concerned; and that that, which *is known*, is not rendered less certain by that, which is unknown; whatever connexion may exist between them; or whatever embarrassments may arise concerning that, which is unknown.

It was with these views, that I chose to state the doctrine of this discourse in the words, in which it was expressed. I observed, that *in consequence of the Apostacy of Adam, all men have sinned.*

The *universality of sin* was, I trust, proved sufficiently in two preceding discourses. In this, if I mistake not, it has been proved, that *the sin of Mankind has existed in consequence of that Apostacy*. By this language I presume my audience understand me to intend, *that if Adam had not fallen, sin would not have entered this world.* To this single fact I have confined all my observations; because this is the simple account, given in the Scriptures; and because I supposed it capable of being easily comprehended, and satisfactorily proved.

I shall only add, that *a Cause of human depravity* is here alleged, of which all the characteristics, mentioned in the commencement of this discourse, may be truly predicated: viz. *The corruption of that Energy of the Mind, whence volitions flow; and which I have heretofore asserted to be the seat of moral character in Rational beings.* This cause must be acknowledged *to be universal; to be every where the same; and not to have always existed.* It must also be conceded, *that it began to exist*, according to the Scriptures, *as early as the effects*, which have given birth to all our inquiries concerning the Corruption of Mankind.

SERMON XXXIII.

DEPRAVITY OF MAN.—REMARKS.

ROMANS v. 12.—*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.*

IN the four preceding discourses, I have endeavoured to show *the Universality, and Extent, of human corruption; and its existence in consequence of the Apostacy of Adam.* It is now my design to subjoin to the observations, made in these discourses, several Remarks, naturally arising from the consideration of this subject, and of no inconsiderable importance. The end of all doctrinal preaching is *to persuade men cordially to receive truth, that they may be governed by it* in their conduct; and of *preaching, in any particular instance, to persuade them thus to receive one truth, in order to their reception of others.*

From doctrines so important, and so absolutely fundamental, as those, which have occupied these discourses, very numerous inferences, of great moment, cannot fail to be drawn by a mind, addicted to solemn contemplation. A small number of them, only, can, however, be mentioned with advantage in a single sermon. For the present occasion I have selected the following.

I. *It is evident from the last of these discourses, that the corruption of Man is not the result of any given form of Government, nor of any given character in Rulers.*

At this subject I have glanced in a former discourse; but have reserved the more extensive discussion, which it merits, for the present occasion.

It has been frequently and triumphantly said, particularly in modern times, *that the corruption of mankind is wholly artificial; and owes its existence to civilized society; particularly to the form and administration of government, and to the civil and ecclesiastical rulers of mankind.*

The method, in which these orders of men are supposed to have corrupted their fellow-men, is *that of oppression.* At least, this is considered as the chief instrument of the corruption; and is supposed to operate, principally, in *two ways;* viz. *keeping them poor, and keeping them ignorant.*

It ought, undoubtedly, to be acknowledged, that the rulers of mankind have extensively corrupted them, that they have also greatly oppressed them, and that by keeping them poor and ignorant, they have contributed in a very great and guilty degree to the increase of their corruption. It ought to be further acknowledged, that rulers, and other men of wealth and influence, have much

more effectually, and extensively, corrupted their fellow-men by example, art, and seduction; by exhibiting to them powerful temptations; placing within their reach the means of sin; making the path to perpetration smooth, easy, and safe; and presenting to them arguments, ingeniously and laboriously contrived to justify them in the commission; than they have ever done by both the methods, alleged above. The philosophers, with whom I am contending, have probably insisted less on this source of human corruption, partly because they wished to render the men in question odious, and thought this an efficacious mean of accomplishing their purpose; and partly because they were sensible, that themselves were deeply implicated in the charge of corrupting mankind in the manner last mentioned. So far as argument and influence have increased the turpitude of the human character, few men are chargeable with so great a share of the guilt. Their arguments concerning moral subjects have been commonly mere means of seduction; and their example has only seconded their arguments. A host of ancient philosophers were banished from *Rome*, as a public nuisance. Had a large proportion of modern ones lived in the same city, at the same time, there is little reason to doubt, that they would have shared the same fate, for the same reason.

The form of Government, also, in some cases, and the peculiar administration of it in others, have undoubtedly contributed in a distinguished degree to the depravation of mankind. *Monarchies* have produced this effect by immense patronage; by the operations of despotic power, demanding and effectuating a slavish dependence, and a base sacrifice of principle, in their subjects; by splendour, luxury, war, and a general dissoluteness of manners. *Republican governments*, although in certain circumstances more favourable to virtue, have yet, at times, been equally pernicious by furnishing opportunities, and strong temptations, for the sacrifice of integrity at elections, for caballing, bribery, faction, private ambition, bold contentions for place and power, and that civil discord, which is naturally accompanied by the prostration of Morality and Religion. Thus *Rome*, in the time of *Marius* and *Sylla*, degenerated with inconceivable rapidity. This example many other Republics have been but too willing to follow. The *heathen priests and princes*, also, although generally believing in the most serious manner the miserable, demoralizing idolatry, which they professed, found a deep interest in the establishment of their religious systems, and the deplorable corruption, by which they were of course attended.

The *Romish Hierarchy*, uniting in itself all authority both secular and ecclesiastical, presented immense inducements to the love of wealth, power, splendour, and sensuality; and vast means of gratifying these corrupt propensities of the human heart. At the same time, it held out the most efficacious motives to the perpetuation of these enjoyments, by keeping Mankind in a state of abject ig-

norance, slavery, and corruption. In this manner it contributed more to this dreadful purpose than any other political system, which the world has ever seen. Like the mountains, piled up by the Giants, it seemed, for a time, to menace Heaven itself with the loss of its dominion over the Earth; and, like the Deluge, swept from this world almost every thing which had life.

It must further be conceded, that among *protestant ministers*, although plainly the most unblameable and exemplary class of men, who in equal numbers have ever appeared in this world, there have not been wanting those who, by means of their latitudinarian doctrines, and loose lives, have exercised a malignant influence over their fellow-men, and contributed in a serious degree to the depravation of the human character.

Finally; *Infidel Philosophers, of modern times*, have surpassed, in the wonderful rapidity and success, with which they have dissolved the human character, and destroyed the very remembrance of principle, even the portentous mischiefs of the *Romish Hierarchy*, Were it not, that such nuisances to the world are, in their very nature, incapable of operating with such efficacy for any long continuance; they would change the earth into a desert, where no principle would spring, and no happiness grow. Like the *Genii*, fabled in *Arabian Tales*, they would enchant the towns and cities of this world with a more than magical wand; and, where rational and immortal beings once lived and acted, where morals flourished, Religion scattered her blessings, and the worship of God ascended to Heaven as *the odour of sweet incense*, leave nothing but the forms of men; without motion, without life, without souls; imprisoned beyond the hope of escape within their encompassing walls, and surrounded by nothing but silence, solitude, and death.

These concessions will, it is presumed, be thought sufficiently liberal and ample. Still the doctrine, against which they have been pleaded, is not even remotely affected by them; but stands in full force, and on the basis of conclusive evidence. For,

1st. *The subjects of virtuous rulers have been deeply depraved.*

Rulers, although in a great majority of instances corrupt, and, in many, wonderfully corrupt, have yet in many others been virtuous, and in some eminently virtuous. It will not, as with truth it plainly cannot, be denied, that virtuous rulers have had a real and happy influence in reforming those, whom they governed. The example, and efforts, of all men in high authority, have ever been efficacious; if good, to encourage virtue; if evil, to promote vice. The good, which virtuous rulers have done, has not been here merely negative: that is, they have not merely ceased to corrupt their fellow-men; but with a positive efficacy they have directly contributed to make them better. This is so evident from uniform experience, that an attempt to prove it would only be a waste of time. Example and influence are proverbially powerful, even in private life; and no man needs to be informed, that they

are more effectual in the chair of authority, than in the cottage. Nor will any man, acquainted with history, deny, that *David, Hezekiah, and Josiah, the Maccabees, Alfred the Great, Edward VI.* or the two elder *Gustavuses*, reformed, in a serious degree, the nations over whom they presided.

Still it is equally well known to all persons of information, that no ruler, and no succession of rulers, ever changed the native character of man in any such manner, as to make the nations, whom they governed, generally virtuous; or at all to lessen the evidence, which supports the doctrine of universal depravity. What they have done we style, with metaphysical exactness, *Reformation;* that is, forming anew the moral character, which they actually found, and which, only, was every where the subject of their efforts. In our very language we thus testify, unwillingly perhaps, that the moral character of our race is such, as needs to be formed anew: or, in other words, is depraved. Even this reformation good rulers have accomplished with great labour and difficulty; and it was confined to a number of instances, in a melancholy degree moderate. Of this truth flagrant proof has been furnished in the sudden and deplorable revival of all kinds of iniquity at the moment, when the restraining influence of a good ruler has been taken away by death, and a new license has been given to the free indulgence of the native human propensities by the succession of a wicked prince to the sceptre. Such a prince has had more influence to corrupt a nation in a year, than a virtuous one to amend them during his whole reign. *Manasseh* pulled down in a day, what *Hezekiah* had been building up through his life. Or, perhaps, in more exact language, what virtuous princes accomplish with such vast labour, dissolves of itself, under the malignant influence of corruption universally experienced; and universally operating, whenever that corruption is freed from the restraints, imposed on it by Virtue seated on a throne. Were the mind of man originally inclined to virtue, this would be impossible.

2dly, *Those subjects, who have been raised above the oppression and ignorance contended for, have not been more free than others from this depravity.*

If the oppression and ignorance, specified, were indeed the causes of this corruption; then the corruption ought not to be extended to those subjects, who were neither ignorant, nor oppressed. But we do not find these men, in fact, any better than their fellow-subjects.

On the contrary, the more that men have possessed the means of pleasure and sin; the more wealth, independence, and self-control they have enjoyed; the more corrupt they have usually been. How often do we see a youth, or a poor man, by coming suddenly to opulence, and high personal independence, lose his former sober, decent character, and become at once grossly immoral? So common is this fact, as to be proverbially remarked, and to be the

foundation of important prudential maxims concerning the management of our children. All observing men, even of the most ordinary education, hold it as a fundamental doctrine of experience, that *it is harder to bear prosperity than adversity.*

Men of science, learning, and extensive information, have in the mean time, been to a great extent exceedingly corrupt and wicked; incomparably more so in degree, than the ignorant; and proportionally as much so in the number of instances. The ancient philosophers, the most learned and intelligent men of the Heathen world, were very generally gross examples of sin. Infidel philosophers in modern times have, in this respect, certainly not fallen behind them. Of the former of these assertions *Cicero, Plutarch, Lucian, Seneca, and Diogenes Laertius*, themselves philosophers, are ample and unimpeachable witnesses; of the latter, the writings, and lives, of the philosophers themselves. The truth is, as any man, who knows any thing of the subject, readily discerns; knowledge is a thing, entirely distinct from virtue, not necessarily connected with it, and, without virtue, is but too often the means of ingenious, powerful, and dreadful iniquity. There is not a reason, furnished by experience, to induce a belief, that the increase of knowledge is of course the increase of virtue.

3dly. *In those states of society, where Rulers have the least influence which is possible in the present world, men are not less vicious, in proportion to their power of being vicious, than they are, where Rulers have the greatest influence.*

For complete proof of this assertion I appeal to the state of the aboriginal *Americans*. In the state of society existing among these people, men are as independent, and as little influenced by power, authority, and governmental example, as men, living together, can be. Here, neither kings, nor nobles, nor priests, have any other weight, or control, than that, which springs of course from the mere gathering together of human beings. Yet no man, who knows any thing of the morals of these people, can hesitate to acknowledge them corrupt, in a degree enormous and dreadful. Fraud, falsehood, lewdness, drunkenness, treachery, malice, cruelty, and murder, acted out in the most deplorable manner, are strong and dreadful features of the whole savage character. Here, then, the vice exists anterior to artificial society, and in the state, nearest to that, which is called "*The State of Nature.*" What is true of the *American savages* is true of all others; and universally furnishes undeniable proof of fearful depravity, originally inherent in Man, and wholly independent of the causes alleged in this objection.

4thly. *Republics have been equally corrupt with monarchies.*

In Republics the influence, and the oppression, of Kings are unknown. If, then, Republics have been no less corrupt than monarchies: regal oppression and influence are falsely alleged as the proper and original causes of human depravity; since, here, they do not exist. In the most absolute freedom ever found in Repub-

lics, wickedness has been as truly the character of men, as in kingdoms. This character, also, has been equally depraved; not in all instances, I readily grant; but in more than enough to establish the doctrine. *Carthage*, *Rome*, *Athens*, *Sparta*, *Venice*, *the Grison states*, *and Republican France*, are undeniable examples. It ought particularly to be remarked, that Republics have usually oppressed their provinces with more unfeeling cruelty, than monarchies. Their own freedom, therefore, has not made them at all *more* friendly, but *less* so, to the freedom and happiness of their fellow-men. The deplorable vassalage, existing in our own country to an enormous extent, is a flagrant and melancholy, although it may be thought an invidious, proof of this assertion. If, then, some Republics have been distinguished by a higher degree of virtue, as has undoubtedly been the fact; the cause was not their freedom; for that has universally existed, and operated; but something peculiar to themselves.

5thly. *In the Republics, which have been most distinguished for virtue, Ministers of the Gospel have had the greatest influence.*

Switzerland, *Holland*, *Massachusetts*, and *Connecticut*, have long, by general acknowledgment, been placed among the most virtuous Republics. But, in all these, Clergymen have had more influence, than in any other. On the contrary, where Clergymen have had little influence, there has been comparatively but very little virtue. Of this truth instances are numerous, and at hand. They are, also, too clear to admit of a doubt. The general voice of mankind has decided this point; and from this voice there can be no appeal.

Hence it is evident, that the influence of Clergymen is so far from contributing to the corruption of Mankind, upon the whole, that it has meliorated their character most, where it has most prevailed; and rendered them materially better than they have been elsewhere. I speak here, it will be observed, only of *protestant Ministers of the Gospel.* I know it has been the custom of Infidels to groupe them together with *Romish Priests;* to whom of all men *they* have been most opposed, and whom they, more than any other men, have contributed to overthrow; and with *Heathen Priests;* with whom they have nothing in common, except the essential characteristics of men, and a title, at times applied to both; a mere generic name; formed by the same letters indeed, but meaning, in the different applications, things as unlike, as folly and wisdom, holiness and sin. As well might *Newton*, *Locke*, *Butler and Boyle*, be united in a monstrous assemblage with *Spinosa*, *Voltaire*, *Diderot*, *and Condorcet*, because they have all been styled Philosophers; *Alfred* twinned with *Kouli Khan*, because they have both been called kings; and *Sydenham* be coupled with an *Indian Powwaw*, because they have both been named Physicians.

It ought further to be observed, as an universal truth, that in all protestant countries; the countries, where virtue has flourished

more than in any other; the existence of virtue has been exactly proportioned to the influence of Ministers of the Gospel. All real virtue is the effect of the Gospel, crowned with the divine blessing. But wherever the Gospel has the greatest effects, its Ministers are the most respected and influential; for the principal efficacy of the Gospel is conveyed through their preaching, candidly and kindly received. *Scotland* may be mentioned as a strong instance of this general truth. In that country, under a regal government, and amid the influence of a powerful body of Nobles, supposed by my antagonists to be so hostile to the existence of virtue, there has perhaps long been less vice, and more virtue, than in any *European* country of equal extent. Yet, there, the influence of Clergymen has, in all probability, been greater than in any other protestant country.

6thly. *In a state of Anarchy, virtue is uniformly at the lowest ebb, and vice most prevalent and dreadful.*

In a state of anarchy all lawful authority and regular influence, both civil and ecclesiastical, are extinguished; and lose, therefore, whatever efficacy they may be supposed to possess towards the corruption of mankind. Yet of all situations, in which society can be placed, anarchy is the most pernicious to the morals of men. Of this truth we have proverbial evidence in the great practical maxim, *That no people can exist, for any length of time, in a state of anarchy.* Of the soundness of this important doctrine, our own country, during the late Revolution, gave sufficient proof. When the restraints of Government and Religion were only partially taken off, men became vicious in a moment, to a degree, here unexampled. I myself have seen a number of men, commonly sober, decent, moral, and orderly, in their deportment, lose, upon joining a mob, even the appearance of these characteristics; and exhibit more and grosser vice in a few hours, than in many preceding years.

The restraints of Government and Religion are, therefore, so far from making men worse upon the whole, that without them men become so profligate, as to render it impossible for them even to live together. All this is indeed very easily understood. Government, in *the great body of cases*, restrains men only from vice; and Religion, that is, *the Religion of the Gospel*, in *every case*. The sanctions of Government are protection to those who obey, and punishment to those who disobey. The sanctions of Religion are endless rewards to virtue, and endless punishments to sin. That these sanctions promote vice is a paradox, which I leave to be solved by others. He, who can solve it, will prove in his solution, that men are disposed to be virtuous and vicious without motives to either; and to be virtuous, only under the influence of the strongest motives to vice; and vicious, only under the influence of the strongest motives to virtue. The honour of this discovery I shall not dispute with any man, who is willing to claim it as his own.

The truth plainly is, and ever has been; Mankind, as a body, are uniformly more or less wicked, in proportion to the means, which they possess, of vicious indulgence; and to the temptations, by which they are surrounded. Kings, nobles, and all others possessed of wealth, power, talents, and influence, although having the same nature with other men, are usually more vicious, because these things furnish them with ampler means of sin, and stronger temptations. Mediocrity of life, on the contrary, has ever been believed by wise men among Heathens, as well as Christians, to be the state most favourable to virtue; and has, therefore, proverbially been styled *the Golden Mean*. *Agur* has taught this doctrine from the mouth of God. Experience and Common Sense have given it their fullest attestation.

Even poverty and persecution have in many instances proved favourable to morals and religion. The poverty of *Sparta* was a prime source of whatever was honourable in its character; and Christianity flourished amid the sufferings of its Martyrs.

From these observations it is evident, that the depravity of man exists independently of every state of society, and is found in every situation in which man is found; that it exists wherever oppression is, and wherever it is not; with, and without, the authority or influence of privileged men; in the independent savage, and the abject slave of *Asiatic* despotism; in the wild *Arabian*, and the silken courtier; in the prince who is above all law, and the peasant who is subjected to every law. The scheme, which I am opposing, is, therefore, a mere plaything of doubting Philosophy, making for herself worlds, as children make soap-bubbles, amusing herself less rationally, and hoping for their permanency with more egregious credulity.

II. *It is evident from these discourses, that the scheme of Human Perfectibility is without any foundation.*

There are two methods, in which this truth may be satisfactorily evinced.

1st. *From Fact.*

Mankind have, in every age, laboured with great earnestness to perfect the human character. The immense toils of education have been intentionally directed to this end. Schools and Colleges without number have been erected; multitudes of wise and industrious men have laboured through life; books have been written, laws have been enacted, and magistrates have been employed, in an almost endless multitude; for the same great purpose. Nay, God has Himself revealed his own Will; requiring with infinite authority, instructing with infinite wisdom, and urging with infinite motives, that men should become virtuous. The Redeemer of Mankind was born, lived, and died; the Spirit of Grace has descended, influenced, and blessed; the worship of God has regularly been celebrated through a great part of the world; and a vast succession of wise and faithful ministers have spent life; to

accomplish this glorious design. Yet how little has been done! How few have been seriously amended! What one has been raised to perfection? Trace the history, search the race, of Man; and tell me, Where is he to be found?

Shall we then believe, that the schemes of modern philosophy will accomplish what all preceding philosophers, and men much wiser than philosophers, what the Word of God, the Redemption of his Son, and the communications of his Spirit, have never yet accomplished? Can human perfection be the result of *a benevolence*, which, indeed, utters good words, but is a total stranger to good actions; which is occupied in lamenting, while it should relieve; which says to the poor, the hungry, and the naked, *Depart in peace; be ye warmed, and be ye filled:* which is exhaled in sighs, and emptied out in tears: which shrinks from the cottage of poverty, and withdraws its icy hand from the supplications of distress; which agonizes over imagined sufferers in *Japan*, but can neither see, nor hear, real ones at its own door: which deplores the disastrous fate of profligates and villains, and arraigns the justice, which consigns them to the gaol or the gibbet; but exults in the ruin of worth, the destruction of human peace, and the contemplated devastation of a world? Can the perfection of man be the result of *intelligence*, which dictates, as the happiest state of society, *a community of labours;* in which the idle would literally do nothing, and the industrious nothing more than to supply their own absolute wants: *a community of property;* in which little would be earned, much of that little wasted on mere lust, and the remainder lost; because none would preserve what none expected to enjoy: *a community of wives;* in which affection would cease, principle vanish, furious animosity distract, and fierce revenge assassinate; and in which children would grow up, when they did not perish in infancy, without a known father, without comfortable subsistence, without education, without worth, without a name. When Men become immortal by medicine and moral energy, according to the dreams of the same philosophy, they may perhaps become perfect by the proposed schemes of its discipline.

To such persons, as insist, that the melioration suggested has failed, because the means used were imperfectly fitted to accomplish the end; I answer: If the end were possible; it is reasonable to believe, that amid so great a variety, extent, and continuance, of these means, directed to this end by the highest human wisdom, some one system would have succeeded. As these have all failed; it cannot be rationally doubted, that all others will fail. Those, particularly, which are now offered as substitutes, promise not even the remotest degree of success; and are, on the other hand, fraught with the most portentous threatenings of absolute ruin. To these things I will add, that the authors of them, on whom their efficacy ought first to be proved, are farther removed from virtue, than mankind in general. Until their own character,

therefore, is materially changed for the better, they may be unanswerably addressed with the forcible Jewish proverb, *Physician, heal thyself.*

2dly. *It is also clearly evinced by the nature of the case.*

The depravity of Man is a part of his constitution, of his nature, of himself. To perfect his character it would be necessary to change him into a new creature; and separate a part of that, which makes him what he is: viz. his moral character. It would be equally rational to say, that Man in the present world can become a flying creature, as that he can become a perfect creature. If he can be turned into a Bird, he may also, perhaps, be changed into an Angel. All that has been hitherto done, and therefore all that will hereafter be done, is to confine one class of his desires, viz. *those which are sinful by their excess*, within juster bounds; and to prevent in some measure the risings of the other, viz. *those which are sinful in their nature.* Until more than this shall be effected, the world will be equally, and justly, astonished at the folly, which could persuade *Godwin*, that a plough could be made to move through a field of itself, and that man could be rendered perfect by his scheme of discipline.

III. *From these discourses it is evident, that the fundamental principle of moral and political science, so far as man is concerned, is his Depravity.*

It will not be questioned, that virtuous and depraved beings differ from each other radically; nor that the science of the one must of course differ in its fundamental principles from the science of the other. A philosopher might, if possessed of competent knowledge, describe exactly the character of an Angel; and yet scarcely say any thing, except what pertains to a moral being as such, which would be at all applicable to the character of man. A Book, displaying the whole nature and conduct of our first parents, in Paradise, would contain scarcely any thing, descriptive of their apostate descendants. But all science of this nature is founded in facts; and is formed of facts, and the relations which spring from them. The first great fact in the science of Man is, that he is a depraved being. *This is the first and fundamental fact*, because out of it arise, and by it are characterized, all his volitions, and all his conduct. Hence every thing, pertaining to Man, is coloured, and qualified, by this part of his moral nature; and no description of him can be true, and no doctrine sound, or defensible, into which this consideration does not essentially enter. Equally true is it, that no system of regulations can be practically suited to him, or fitted to control his conduct with success, or efficacy, which is not founded on the same principle.

From these observations it is evident, that much of what is published, and received, as moral and political science, is only *science falsely so called.* It considers man as originally a virtuous being; accidentally, and in some small degrees, warped from the

path of rectitude, and always ready to return to it again; deceived, and abused, by insidious and peculiarly corrupted individuals; but, left to himself, designing nothing beside what is good, and uttering nothing but what is true. This indeed is a character *devoutly to be wished;* but the picture is without an original; in the language of painters, a mere "fancy-piece:" and it would be as easy to find the human character in a *Gryphon* of *Ariosto*, or the *sylphs*, *gnomes*, and *nymphs*, of *Rosicrucius*, as in a library filled with this species of philosophy.

Were these systems to terminate in *speculation only*, their authors might be permitted to dream on without disturbance. But unhappily their doctrines *are made the foundation, and directory, of personal conduct, and public administration.* Rules of private life, municipal laws, and other governmental regulations, are drawn from these pleasing, but merely hypothetical doctrines; and are intended, and expected, actually to control men, and their affairs, so as to effectuate good order, peace, and prosperity. Here the influence of systems, which proceed according to this scheme, becomes eminently dangerous, malignant, and fatal. All the measures, founded on them, are fitted for the inhabitants of some other planet, or the natives of fairy land, or the forms which haunt the dreams of a distempered fancy, with an incomparably better adaptation, than for men. Of course, they can never become practical, or useful, to such beings, as really exist in this world; impatient even of necessary restraints; selfish; covetous; proud; envious; wrathful; revengeful; lewd; forgetful of God; and hostile to each other. Open your eyes on the beings around you: cast them back on the annals of history: turn them inward upon yourselves: and you will find ample and overwhelming proof of the truth of these observations.

On this fundamental folly were founded all those vain, empty, miserable systems of policy, which, in a portentous succession, deluged Republican *France* in misery and ruin. In the treatises, laws, and measures, brought into being in that nation, during its late wonderful struggle to become free, the people were uniformly declared to be good; honest; virtuous; influenced only by the purest motives; and aiming only at the best ends. These very people, at the same time, were employed in little else, except unceasing plunder, uniform treachery, the violation of all laws, the utterance of all falsehood, the murder of their King, Nobles, and Clergy, and the boundless butchery of each other. In a state of immorality, in a prostration of all principle, at which even this sinful world stood aghast, this despicable flattery was continually reiterated; and the miserable objects of it very naturally concluded, that, as they were praised *while* they were doing these things, they were praised *for* doing them. Of course they were fixed in this conduct beyond recall. Every malignant passion was let loose, the reins were thrown upon the neck of every sordid appetite; the

people became a collection of wild beasts, and the country a den of ravage and slaughter. In this situation, nothing could restrain them, but force. The wretches, who by their songs and incantations had called up the fiends of mischief, could not lay them; but became, in an enormous and horrid succession, victims of their own spells; and were offered up, by hundreds, to the sanguinary *Moloch*, which they had so absurdly and wickedly idolized.

Sound and true policy will always consider Man as he is; and treat him accordingly. Its measures will be universally calculated for depraved beings; and it will, therefore, never hesitate to establish every necessary restraint. Whatever is good in man it will regard as the result of wise, careful, efficacious discipline, realized and blessed by God. Such discipline, therefore, it will regularly establish, protect, and encourage. Honest, well disposed, and orderly citizens it will protect; the violation of private rights, and the disturbers of public peace, it will punish. Nor will its retraints and punishments stop, until they have gained in some good measure their end.

IV. *From these discourses it is evident, that the Redemption of Christ was absolutely necessary to mankind.*

If Man is a depraved creature, it is plainly impossible, that he should be justified by the Law of God. When he comes before his Maker, to *be judged according to his works*, he must be declared to have done evil, because he has in fact done it. The Law has declared, that *the soul which sinneth shall die:* by the Law therefore he must die; because he has sinned. Of course, God cannot pronounce him just, or acquit him of guilt; because he is guilty. Under mere law, the only situation, in which he can be, independently of the Redemption of Christ, he can never be justified, nor rewarded; but must be condemned, and punished. In this situation, an Atonement for his sins, such as God with propriety can and will accept, is just as necessary for Man, as his salvation. No being in the Universe could, so far as we are able to discern, render this atonement, except Christ. All other beings are, in the nature of things, under every possible obligation to render to God all the services in their power, as their own proper obedience; an obedience indispensably necessary for their own justification. A *supererogatory service* does not appear to be possible for any created being; as there is no service, which he can render to God, which is not his indispensable duty. Thus, so far as we are able to discern, the Atonement of Christ is absolutely necessary for the human race; and without it we can conceive of no possible way of salvation.

V. *The same doctrine equally teaches the absolute necessity of Regeneration to mankind.*

That *without Holiness no man shall see the Lord*, is a doctrine so evidently rational, and just, that it cannot but be believed by every sober man; even independently of the express declaration of the

Scriptures. But without Regeneration Man is only unholy; and can, therefore, never *see the Lord.* The first great effect of the Redemption of Christ, is to render it possible for man to become holy, in order to his justification, and acceptance. Had the dispensation stopped here; Man would still have been lost. The next step in this wonderful procedure is the Renovation of man; or that implantation of holiness in his heart, styled in the Scriptures, Regeneration, or the New Birth. From the commencement of this great change in his character he becomes the subject of evangelical holiness; of real piety, real benevolence, real self-government; or, generally, of real obedience to God. All his obedience, however, is imperfect; and could not be accepted, but for the sake of Christ. His mediation, his righteousness, is *the sweet incense* which perfumes every offering and act of man, and renders it acceptable before that pure and awful Being, *in whose sight the Heavens* themselves *are not clean.* But, though imperfectly holy, man, when renewed, is really holy. *There is some good thing found in him towards the Lord God of Isreal.* This, as a seed of inestimable worth, is seen by the All-searching Eye to promise a future and eternal production of fruits, invaluable in their nature, and endless in their multitude.

VI. *With equal evidence we are here taught the necessity of the Mission of the Holy Spirit.*

The Holy Spirit is the only author of the Regeneration of Man. *That which is born of the flesh is flesh; that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Except a man be born of the Spirit he cannot see the kingdom of God. Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his own mercy, he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.* As therefore, Regeneration is absolutely necessary to Man; and as Man is renewed only by the Holy Spirit; so the Mission of the Spirit is as necessary to Man, as his Regeneration; and both are no less necessary, than his eternal life.

On these three great Evangelical doctrines I have here descanted very briefly, because they will hereafter be primary subjects of investigation. They have been now mentioned, chiefly to show their connexion with the doctrine of human depravity, and the manner, in which they necessarily arise out of this part of the scriptural scheme.

VII. *The same considerations also teach us the manner, in which a Preacher ought to address Mankind.*

Every congregation will be regarded by a Minister of Christ, who discerns this doctrine to be, what it plainly is, a leading doctrine of the Scriptures, as a collection of depraved, guilty beings, exposed to endless punishment for their sins. On this basis will all his sermons be founded; and to this point will they all refer. He will exhort them to *repent;* because they are sinners, and therefore need repentance. He will exhort them to *believe in Christ;*

because they cannot save themselves; and because He can, and if they believe in him, will save them. He will teach them to *seek for pardon of God;* because they are sinners, and must either be pardoned, or lost: *to rely on the grace of God for their justification;* because they have no merit of their own; and, if they depend on their own righteousness, cannot be saved: and *to feel the necessity of sanctification;* because, *without holiness no man shall see the Lord;* and because, without the sanctification of the Spirit of Grace no man can become holy.

The terrors of the Law he will set before his hearers in their own awful light; because by these, and by nothing but these, such beings can ordinarily *be persuaded. The Gospel* he will declare to be *Glad Tidings of great joy;* because it is the news of forgiveness, justification, and everlasting life, to sinners, who would otherwise perish. *Mercy* he will unfold as the peculiar *glory of God in the highest*, and as eminently displayed, when *peace and good-will* are published to *mankind.* The distinguishing excellence of the Redeemer he will explain to be, is willingness *to seek, and save, that which was lost.* The duty of Christians, now become peculiarly their duty, he will teach to consist *in denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living soberly, righteously, and godly, in the world.* Thus, whether God or Man, the Law or the Gospel, Heaven or Hell, morality or piety, are the themes of his preaching; he will make the corruption of the human heart the foundation, on which all will be built; the great point, to which all will be continually referred.

These are subjects of preaching, which cannot fail to interest the Preacher, who really believes them; or the hearers, who listen to them with serious attention. They state to Man, they bring to full view, they carry home to the heart, his real condition, and only hope. He sees, if not prevented by sottish sloth, or criminal prejudice, that the whole is the truth of God; truth infinitely important to himself; *commending* itself *to his conscience;* explaining his danger; disclosing the only way of escape; unfolding deliverance from hell; and pointing out the path to heaven. The preacher, who utters these things, is readily believed to have a real meaning, when he speaks of the solemnity and importance of Religion, and presses upon his hearers the necessity of embracing it. They clearly discern, that there is something, which they easily comprehend, to be done by them; and a momentous reason, why it should be done: that a change real, great, and indispensable, is to be accomplished in their character; and that, unless it is accomplished, they must perish. Christianity hence assumes a solemnity, which can be derived from no other considerations, and accords with no other scheme.

The Preacher, who regards man as originally virtuous, can neither explain to him his guilt or his danger; show him the necessity of Christ's mediation, or the importance of an interest in it; ex-

plain to him the value of Faith, or the use of Repentance; nor exhort him to fly to the Mercy of God for forgiveness, or sanctification. He urges, therefore, a Religion, in which both his hearers and himself find little interest. His addresses to them are naturally made up of cold, common place morality; such as *Plato* taught long since, and taught much better; or at least with greater force. They of course become dull and lifeless; unfrequent visiters to the house of God; and, when there, are rarely of that number, *who have ears to hear.*

VIII. *In the same manner are all men taught how they ought to regard themselves in their religious concerns.*

The question, *What will become of me hereafter?* is of infinite moment to every child of *Adam;* and is to be always determined by the true answer to another: *Am I virtuous, or sinful?*

The man who commences his moral course with a full conviction of his guilt, his exposure to the wrath of God, and his danger of final condemnation, will, if he goes on, direct his feet into a path, widely distant from that, which is pursued by men, directed by the contrary doctrines. To such a man all the accounts given in the Scriptures, and in religious discourses built on the Scriptures, concerning human guilt and danger, will be true and important. The tidings of Redemption will be to him *tidings of great joy;* because they are directed to such a creature as himself. Christ to him will be infinitely precious; because he is the Saviour of sinners. The renewing power and goodness of the Spirit of Grace will appear to him unspeakably necessary and desirable; because, without this divine energy, exerted on his heart, he will be a sinner for ever. To the atonement of Christ he will fly for refuge; because he cannot make an atonement for himself. To the purifying influence of the Divine Spirit he will look for his preservation in holiness, and his safe arrival in the kingdom of life; because he will know, that he cannot preserve, nor conduct himself to that kingdom.

As a sinner, he will feel himself guilty, condemned, and ruined; but, as an object of the divine mercy, he will see glorious hopes dawning upon him from Heaven. *Separated from Christ,* he will feel that he *can do nothing* effectual toward his salvation; but as a candidate for Heaven by Faith, Repentance, and Holiness, he will discern, that *all things* may be done for him by the Spirit of God. Left to himself, he will perceive, that he must die for ever; but that in Christ he may for ever live.

With these views, all his self-examination, prayers, praises, hopes, resolutions, and efforts, will take their peculiar character from the great truth, *that he is a depraved, ruined creature.* His whole life, therefore, will be the life of a believing, penitent, and returning sinner, owing infinite blessings to the mere grace of God; and he will find more to animate his love, faithfulness, and gratitude, than an Angel with the same powers could feel; because he

is a forgiven and restored creature; forgiven an immense debt, and restored to holiness and endless life.

But if a sinner feels himself to be originally virtuous, he will feebly realize his guilt, his danger, or his need of a Saviour. The necessity of being born again, of being sanctified, guided, and quickened, by the Spirit of God, he cannot know. Justification he will regard as due to him; as the proper reward of his merit; and holiness, as his original character, the native growth of his mind. He may, indeed, admit it to be imperfect, and to require some additions; yet even these he will esteem rather as advantageous than necessary. Christ he will consider rather as a convenience, as an auxiliary to him, than as his Saviour. His ultimate reliance will be on himself, not on the Redeemer. The Gospel, instead of being the only and most joyful news of Salvation to sinners, will be considered by him merely as a valuable book; somewhat better than any volume of philosophy; in which some interesting instructions may be found, and some useful precepts are given; but which is not indispensable to his eternal life. In a word, according to his predominant feeling, both he, and others like him, might have done very well without the Gospel here; and, with little danger of failure, might have obtained salvation beyond the grave.

SERMON XXXIV.

APOSTATE MAN CANNOT BE JUSTIFIED BY WORKS OF LAW.

ROMANS iii. 20.—*Therefore, by the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.*

IN several preceding discourses I have considered *the Universality and Degree, of human corruption, and its existence in Consequence of the Apostacy of Adam;* and have also derived from the observations, made in them concerning these subjects, *several Inferences*, which I supposed to be of serious importance to Mankind. The next object of inquiry in a System of Theology is *the Situation, in which mankind are by means of their corruption.* It is impossible for a rational being to know, that he has offended God, and is now the object of his displeasure, without being, if he is not absolutely stupid, deeply alarmed by a sense of his danger at least, if not of his guilt.

All creatures are absolutely in the hands of God, and must be disposed of according to his pleasure. If he wills it, they are happy; if he wills it, they are miserable. He speaks, and it is done; he commands, and it stands fast. From his eye there is no concealment; from his hand there is no escape; from his anger there is no refuge. What, then, will become of those, who are found guilty at the final trial; who can plead no excuse for their sins, and offer no expiation for their souls? *He is not a man*, as we are, *that* we *should answer him;* and that we *should come together in judgment. Neither is there any day's man* (any mediator) *betwixt us, who might lay his hand upon us both*, and make reconciliation between us. When I say, that there is no day's man between us and him: you will undoubtedly understand, that I intend this as our situation, while under Law, and independently of the Redemption of Christ. Of this situation it is immensely important for us to form clear and just views. False opinions, here, may easily be fatal to any man. If he feels safe, while he is really in danger; as his danger, if it exist, must be immensely great, and threaten his whole well-being; his sense of safety must of course be ruinous. Whatever is to be done for his future good must be done in this world; since he is to be *judged* and rewarded, *according to the deeds done in the body.*

The text is the close of a long discourse concerning the depravity of both Jews and Gentiles; or in other words, of all mankind; and contains the great and affecting inference, drawn by *St. Paul* himself, or rather given by the Spirit of God, from this humiliating

doctrine. *Therefore by the deeds of the Law shall no flesh be justified in his sight.*

In order to understand the import of this interesting declaration, it is necessary to form distinct and correct views of the term *justify*. This word is *a term of law;* in the judicial proceedings of which *it denotes a sentence of acquittal, passed upon a person, who has been tried concerning his obedience, or disobedience.* The person tried, being found to have obeyed the Law in the manner required, is declared by the Judge to be guiltless of any disobedience. In the language of the text, he is *justified;* that is, declared to be just, or blameless, in the sight of the Law. With exactly this meaning the word is here used by *St. Paul.*

There have been frequent disputes *concerning the Law, here specified.* Some commentators have insisted, that *the Moral*, some that *the Ceremonial*, and some that *the Whole, Law, given by Moses*, is here intended. That neither the Ceremonial, nor Political, Law, of the *Jews* is here designed by the Apostle is, I think, completely evident from a bare consideration of the passage itself. The language is, *that* NO FLESH *shall be justified* by means of the Law intended. It can hardly be supposed, that *St. Paul* meant to say this with reference to the ceremonial or political Law of the *Jews;* because, except the *Jews* themselves, none of the human race can be either acquitted, or condemned, or even tried by those Laws; since the rest of mankind not only have never known them, but have, in almost all instances, been absolutely unable to come to any knowledge of them.

The truth, I apprehend, is, that this difference of opinion has arisen only from *the translation* of the Text. The words in the Original are Διοτι, εξ εργων νομε ε δικαιωθησεται πασα σαρξ ενωπιον αυτε. *Wherefore, by works of Law no flesh*, that is, no man, *shall be justified in his sight*, that is, in the sight of God. *By works of Law in the absolute sense;* that is, *no man shall be justified by any works whatever of any Law, whether natural or revealed.*

The doctrine, contained in the Text, is, therefore, *That no man can be justified on the ground of his obedience to the Law of God.*

This doctrine is so absolutely asserted in the Text, that a plain man, in the exercise of sober common sense, would naturally conclude all attempts to prove it to be misplaced and superfluous. "Whom," he would instinctively say, "shall we believe, if we do not believe God; and what declaration of God can be believed, if this, so plain, so unambiguous, is not to be believed? The efforts of Reason to make it more certain, or more evident, are merely holding a rush-light to the Sun." So much has, however, been written, and said, to explain away even this declaration, and to avoid the truth which it contains, and the same truth, as expressed in all other similar passages of the Scriptures, that, notwithstanding these decisions of common sense, it has become really necessary to examine this doctrine, as well as others. Nor is it

only necessary to examine this doctrine, as *contained in the Scriptures*. It is also of importance to consider *the manner, in which it is regarded by Reason;* and to show, that here as well as elsewhere, notwithstanding several objections suggested against the doctrine, *Reason still entirely harmonizes with Revelation.*

In pursuance of the scheme, which I have thus proposed, I observe,

I. *That the Law of God demands perfect obedience to all its requisitions.*

This is indeed true of every law: for it is no more than saying, that the Law demands what it demands. Yet it is true, in a peculiar sense, of the divine Law. The requisitions of this Law are two: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thine understanding; and Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself:* that is, *Thou shalt devote, with supreme affection, all thy powers to the service of the Lord thy God, throughout the continuance of thy being; and thou shalt do unto others, who are included under the word neighbour*, that is, *all Intelligent creatures, whatsoever thou wouldest, that they in the like circumstances should do unto thee; and this also thou shalt do throughout the continuance of thy being.* The peculiar perfection of the obedience, here required, is the *universality of it.* No other law requires the absolute consecration of all our powers to the obedience of its precepts, or extends its demands to every moment of our existence.

That, which is commonly called *the Law of Nature*, viz. that part of the Law, which is discoverable by unbiassed Reason, without the aid of Revelation, requires, that *we render continual reverence and gratitude to God, and that we invariably do justice, speak truth, and show kindness, to our fellow-men.* All these things are required by the Law of Nature, because all men either do, or may, see them to be certainly their duty.

Without inquiring at this time, whether any man, in a state of nature, ever did any one of these duties in the manner commanded, I shall consider it as sufficient for the present purpose to observe, that no man ever performed them universally, as they are here enjoined. No man, to whom the law of God was revealed, ever loved God, uniformly, with all the heart; or rendered, uniformly, to his neighbour, what he would that his neighbour, in the like circumstances, should render to him: neither did any man, in a state of nature, ever uninterruptedly render to God, the reverence and gratitude, or to his neighbour the truth, justice, and kindness, which it required. Of this obedience every man has plainly fallen short; and very few can be found, who will not, in this view of the subject, confess themselves to be sinners.

II. *The only condition of Justification, known by Law, is complete obedience to its precepts.*

The language of the divine Law, generally resembling that of

every other, is, *Do these things, and thou shalt live; and Cursed is every one, that continueth not in all things, written in the book of the Law, to do them. The soul that sinneth shall die; for not the hearers of the Law are just before God, but the doers of the Law shall be justified.*

This condition of justification is inherent in the very nature of Law. The Law of God, for example, requires certain things of Mankind; and promises, that those, who do them, shall be rewarded. But the reward is promised to no others. On the contrary, those, who do them not, it declares, shall be punished. The former it pronounces just, or guiltless; the latter it pronounces guilty. Obedience and disobedience are plainly the only conditions, by which creatures, subject to this Law, can be justified, condemned, or even tried. The same things, substantially, are true of every other Law. It is presumed, no Law was ever promulged by any authority whatever, which specified any other condition.

III. *It is impossible for mankind, or any other rational beings, to do more than the Law of God requires.*

This Law requires, that we love him with all the heart, and soul, and mind, and strength. Higher love, than this, cannot possibly be rendered by any creature. It requires, that we love him thus at all times. There is no time, therefore, in which such love is not our duty. Supererogatory love, or obedience, of course cannot possibly be rendered by man. Hence, if Man ever fails of obeying, he cannot atone for the sin by any future obedience; because all his future obedience is demanded for the time being. If, then, he is ever guilty of disobedience, his future obedience, however perfect, cannot contribute at all to his justification.

But all men have disobeyed; nay, all are disobedient every day, and every hour; and never render complete obedience, even in a single instance. No man, therefore, is justified, even for the time being.

IV. *The authority of the Law is great in proportion to its importance to the Universe, and to the greatness and dignity of the Lawgiver.*

The Law of God is the foundation of his Government; and of the happiness, which it confers on his Intelligent creatures; a happiness partly attendant on the obedience, in its very nature, and partly its reward from the Lawgiver. This importance of the Law, therefore, cannot be measured.

The greatness and dignity of the Lawgiver are infinite.

That the guilt of disobedience bears, at least, a general proportion to these things will not be denied. Of course, it must be very great; much greater than we can comprehend. Particularly, it is incalculably greater, than if committed merely against human laws, so inferior in their importance, and their capacity of producing happiness; or against mere human Lawgivers, infinitely inferior in dignity and excellence.

The worth of our services, at the same time, is proportioned to the worth of ourselves, who render them. The Law of God requires the obedience of Archangels, as well as that of Men. The *Law* is the same; but *the difference between the subjects*, and the services, in this case, is inestimable by us. The services of the Archangel are plainly of very great worth, in a comparative view; those of Man, of very little. The difference evidently arises from the difference of worth in those who render them.

But the *lowest created being*, as truly as the *highest*, can sin against any law, and any Ruler. His crimes, therefore, can be very great, while his services must of necessity be very small, in their importance.

Hence it is plain, that, if we *could* do works of supererogation, or services not required, we still could make no atonement for our sins. Our sins are enormous evils; and our services in a sense nothing.

V. *The Law of God threatens punishment to the first transgression; and, also, to every succeeding transgression.*

Cursed is every one, that continueth not in all things, written in the book of the Law to do them. He, therefore, *who continues in all things, written in the book of the Law*, except one, *and does them* as required, yet for the omission of that one *is cursed. The soul that sinneth shall die. The soul that sinneth* once; *that sinneth* at all; not *that sinneth* in a long course, and to a given degree, of transgression.

In the day that thou eatest thereof, said God to *Adam, thou shalt surely die. Adam* ate the forbidden fruit once, and lost his immortality.

Human Laws, also, are always formed in the same manner. The thief, the burglar, the murderer, are all punished by human laws for the first theft, burglary, or murder. This is indeed the very nature of Law. It forbids whatever it forbids, and requires whatever it requires, under a penalty for every transgression. The plea, that this is the first transgression, though often alleged as a reason for tenderness and clemency, was, it is presumed, never proposed to a tribunal of justice as a cause of exempting the criminal from punishment, or, perhaps more properly, as a proof, that he did not merit punishment.

These considerations plainly cut off all hope, as well as all ground, of the justification of transgressors in the sight of God, on the score of Justice; and prove the absolute impossibility of justification by works of Law. Still multitudes of mankind, and among them no small number of divines, have thought proper, notwithstanding this peremptory and decisive language of the Law of God, to annex to it *a condition*, upon which, in their view, the hope of acceptance may be rationally formed. I say *a condition;* because I know of *but one;* viz. *Repentance.* As this has been abundantly insisted on, it demands a particular consideration.

The scheme of those, who urge this condition, is, so far as my information extends, the following: *that, although the Law of God does indeed demand perfect obedience; yet from the benevolence of God, it may be fairly expected, that, even under this Law, every sincere penitent will be accepted.*

On this scheme I observe,

1st. *The Law itself makes no mention of any such condition.*

Hence the evidence of this scheme, if it exist at all, must be extraneous to the Law itself. It cannot but be seen, that a case of this nature must demand evidence clearly decisive; both because it is a case infinitely interesting to every child of *Adam*, and because the Law is perfectly silent on this subject. This circumstance renders the scheme originally suspected; for we cannot easily conceive of a reason, why, if acceptance was intended to be granted according to this scheme, God in publishing his Law should observe an absolute silence concerning this condition; and should couch the Law in such language, as, for aught we can see, is directly contradictory to the scheme.

2dly. *Revelation is every where silent concerning this condition of acceptance.*

That Revelation no where expressly annexes the final acceptance of mankind to Repentance alone will, I suppose, be granted. I have been able to find no passage of this nature, myself; and, so far as I know, such a passage has not, hitherto, been pointed out by any one of those, who adopt the scheme. Whatever importance is annexed to Repentance, it certainly cannot be said with truth, that Faith in the Redeemer is not considered in the Gospel as absolutely necessary to the justification of the penitent. It is no where said, that *God may be just, and yet the justifier of him, who* repenteth. Until something equivalent to this can be pointed out, as expressly declared in the Gospel, all the evidence in favour of this scheme must be found in inference and argument.

3dly. *Revelation declares the contrary doctrine.*

In Galatians iii. 21, *St. Paul* says, *If there had been a law, which could have given life; verily righteousness had been by the law.* In this passage it is evident beyond denial, that no law exists, or has ever existed, which could give life, or furnish acceptance and consequent salvation, to men. It is further evident, also, that Righteousness is not to Man by the Law; or, more properly as in the original, *by Law:* that is, by any law whatever. But how those, who are not the subjects of righteousness, that is of moral excellence, or holiness, can *see the Lord*, or be justified and saved, the Scriptures have no where explained.

In Galatians ii. 21, the same Apostle says, *If Righteousness come by the Law, then Christ is dead in vain;* or, more accurately according to the *Greek, If righteousness exist by means of Law, Christ certainly hath died in vain.* If righteousness *do not* exist by means of Law, in any sense whatever; then Man, as a mere subject of

Law, can never be accepted. If righteousness *do* exist by means of Law; then, as God himself has declared, *Christ died in vain.* A serious man must find an insurmountable difficulty in receiving any doctrine, which involves this consequence.

In Romans iii. 25, 26, the Apostle says, *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.* In this passage of Scripture it is declared, that God set forth Jesus Christ to be a Propitiation, to declare his righteousness in the remission of sins, that he might be just, while justifying him that believeth in Jesus. It is therefore certain, that, if he had not set forth Christ to be a Propitiation, he either would not have justified any of mankind; or, if he had done it, would not have been just. Of course, all men, who are justified, are justified only in consequence of this propitiation, and not by means of Law, in any sense whatever.

It is also evident, that Christ becomes a propitiation to us through faith in his blood; and that those only are justified, who believe in Jesus. In the same manner, in Romans v. 9, the Apostle says, *Being justified through*, or by means of, *his blood.* It is therefore certain, that those, who do not believe, will not be justified; and that none are justified without the blood of Christ.

In Romans iii. 30, it is said, *One God, who shall justify the circumcision by Faith, and the uncircumcision through Faith.* Therefore, God will justify neither circumcision nor uncircumcision through, or by repentance. The prophet *Habbakuk*, Chapter ii. verse 4th, repeatedly quoted by *St. Paul*, says, *The just shall live by his Faith:* More exactly, *The just by Faith shall live*, that is, He, who by Faith is just, shall live. Therefore no other will live.

All these and the like considerations have, however, been unsatisfactory to the abettors of this scheme; not, as it appears to me, from any want of explicitness in the declarations themselves, but from their want of accordance with a pre-conceived system; a system derived, I am apprehensive, more from Philosophy, than from the Scriptures. Let us, therefore, examine the dictates of Reason concerning this subject; and see, whether they do not plainly, and exactly, harmonize with Revelation.

What, then, must be the nature and language of a Law, prescribing Repentance as the condition of acceptance and justification! Plainly it must be this: He, who disobeys the Law, shall be punished with death; but, if he repents of his disobedience, he shall not be punished. What would be the consequences of such a Law!

1st. *All men, who hoped to repent, would disobey.*

But from universal experience we are assured beyond a doubt, that every man would hope, that he should at some time or other

repent; because every man would consider repentance as in his power. The consequence, therefore, is irresistible, that every man would disobey.

It is equally evident also, that from the love, and the habit, of disobedience, every man would continue to disobey so long as he thought Repentance was in his power. But disobedience, protracted to so late a period, would become a habit so strong, that none would repent. Nothing is more self-deceiving than a spirit of procrastination. We see it in every thing; and always see it the same. Such a Law, therefore, would frustrate itself; and prove a mere encouragement to disobedience.

2dly. *The thing, punished by such a law, would not be Disobedience, but Impenitence.*

It is undoubtedly true, that every law designs to punish that, which it considers as the transgression; and that only. The thing punished, whatever it is, is in the view of the law the crime; and in that view nothing is a crime, except that, which is punished. But here the law does not threaten the punishment to disobedience, but to impenitence. Impenitence, therefore, is in the view of such a law the only crime. Disobedience, according to the very language of the law, is no crime. But nothing can be a crime, except that, which is constituted a crime by the law. It may be said, that disobedience, being forbidden by the law, is for that reason the crime. This opinion, however, is wholly a mistake. The law, without a penalty, or with respect to whatever it does not threaten with a penalty, ceases to be *a law;* and become *mere advice.* Disobedience to what it thus prohibits may indeed be imprudence, or impropriety; but cannot be a crime in the eye of such a law. Undoubtedly, if the law regarded disobedience as a crime, it would punish it; as every law has done. As, therefore, the Divine Law according to this scheme punishes impenitence only, it regards impenitence as the only crime.

But if disobedience be not a crime, it cannot be repented of: for repentance is a sorrow for crimes, and for them only. Repentance, therefore, would by such a law be rendered impossible.

3dly. *In the present case, that of Man with respect to his Maker, what Degree of repentance will excuse the transgressor from punishment?*

Must it be a perfect repentance? that is, entire, and followed by no future sin? On this condition who could be saved? No man ever has repented, no man ever will repent, in this manner. Shall the repentance be imperfect; a sorrow for sin, inferior in degree, or continuance, to that, which the nature of the case actually demands; a sorrow extending only to a part of the sins actually committed; a confession sincerely and cheerfully made with respect to some sins, and reluctantly concerning the rest; a renunciation of sin, partial in degree, partial as to the number and kinds

of transgressions, and never aiming at, as well as never accomplishing, a thorough reformation of character!

The first difficulty, which attends this scheme, is, that it is no where found in the Scriptures. Few men, who believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God, will question the fact, that *they contain all the terms of Salvation*. It can hardly be supposed, that, when God unfolded his will to mankind concerning this great subject, and declared that he had taught them *all things pertaining to life and to Godliness*, he omitted *this*, which is altogether the principal thing; the point which they were infinitely concerned to know. But there is not a declaration of this nature in the Scriptures. At least I have never been able to find one; nor have I ever seen one alleged. Can it be believed, that this should be the main term, nay, the only one, of our salvation; and yet that it should be no where expressed in a Revelation from God, professedly declaring all the terms of salvation!

This, however, is far from being all. The Scriptures teach us in a thousand forms, both expressly and implicitly, that *we have Redemption through the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of our sins*. As this is the doctrine of the Scriptures, so it is plainly their only doctrine. Indeed, nothing is more evident in the nature of the case, than that, if we have Redemption through his blood, we have it not without his blood; and therefore not by a Repentance of our own.

Nor does Reason furnish us any additional light in favour of this scheme. Reason, indeed, finds itself at a loss to conceive in what manner even a perfect Repentance can cancel former iniquities; or how an absolute penitent can be accepted of God. His sorrow for his sins can in no respect alter their nature, or lessen their demerit; and his future reformation cannot at all obliterate the guilt of his past life. Sorrow for sin is itself the most unequivocal acknowledgment of guilt. If, then, the penitent sees, and knows, himself to be guilty; God must see it also. What, then, should prevent him from expressing his views of it in the punishment of the sinner?

If this Repentance is *imperfect;* those difficulties are multiplied, and enhanced. The penitent, in this case, is still a sinner; and does not even perform the duty of repenting, in the manner, in which he is bound to perform it. He also still loves sin in some degree; and still, occasionally at least, practises it. After he becomes a penitent, therefore, he goes on through life, accumulating guilt, and meriting punishment. Can any man in these circumstances rationally expect acceptance with God? Yet these are the best circumstances, in which Man is ever found.

It is to no purpose to allege, that such a man *obeys the Law in part*. The Law knows of no such condition, as partial obedience. *Adam* obeyed in part; and, what no one of his progeny has ever done, obeyed, for a time, perfectly. But for the first transgression

he was condemned to death, just as if he had never obeyed at all. So far as *Law* is concerned, God deals with his descendants exactly in the same manner. Accordingly, in *Ezekiel* xviii. 24, he says, *But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, all his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned. In his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned; in them he shall die.* He, therefore, *who hath continued in all things, written in the book of the Law to do them, except one*, would still be incapable, according to Law, of being justified. Should he have repented of his first transgression; and should we, contrary to both Reason and Revelation, allow Repentance to be a real ground of Justification, generally considered; yet, if he should die in the commission of sin, or without repentance of the sins which he had last committed, he must, according to this passage, die without justification, and be finally condemned.

Thus, if I mistake not, it has been rendered clearly certain, that *by deeds of Law no flesh shall be justified in the sight of God.*

REMARKS.

1st. *From these observations it is evident, that the atonement of Christ was absolutely necessary in order to the salvation of Mankind.*

Man was originally placed under a dispensation of Law; and in consequence of perfect obedience was promised immortal life: while to his disobedience was threatened eternal death. Obedience, therefore, was the only condition of his justification, and the only source of hope to him beyond the grave. This Law was perfect, and therefore immutable. No part of its demands or threatenings could be changed. It was more proper, *that the Heavens and the Earth should pass away, than that one jot, or one tittle, of the Law should pass* without an exact fulfilment. The Truth plainly is, that the Law is a direct exhibition of the perfect character of God; and to change it would be to manifest, that his character was changed from its absolute perfection. Such an event is evidently impossible.

This perfect Law, however, Man has disobeyed. By his disobedience he has lost the possibility of justification, and the hope of reward; and exposed himself, without any means of escape, or safety, to the punishment, denounced against his transgression. Had he been left in this situation; he must have finally perished. In this situation Christ found him, when *he came to seek, and to save, that which was lost.* In this situation he assumed the character of a Mediator between God and Man; and *made his soul an offering for sin; a sacrifice of a sweet savour, accepted of God* as a satisfactory expiation of human guilt. In this manner he rendered it possible; for before it was impossible; that Man should be restored to the favour of God. The honour of the divine law was

maintained, and even enhanced. The immutability of the love of God to holiness, and of the hatred of God to sin, and the perfect harmony of the divine government in the condemnation of sin, and the forgiveness of sinners, were all illustriously displayed to the view of the Universe. To forgive such, as should repent, and return to their duty, became, now, a dispensation, devested of all inconsistency and impropriety. But, independently of this interference of the Redeemer, no method appears to the human eye, in which the justification of Mankind could have been accomplished without a serious and inadmissible change of the Law and Government of God. Accordingly, we are informed in the Scriptures, that *by his stripes only we are healed. Neither is there*, nor, so far as we can understand, can there be, *salvation in any other: for there is no Name given under heaven among men, whereby we must be saved, but the Name of Jesus Christ.*

2dly. *Speculative Unbelief prevents every hope of Salvation.*

By Speculative unbelief I intend, *first, the disbelief of Divine Revelation*, or *what is commonly called Infidelity*. Every Infidel not only feels, but glories in feeling, a privileged exemption from what he calls the superstition of the Gospel: by which he primarily intends the great Evangelical requisitions of *Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.* It is superfluous for me to insist, that he, who believes not speculatively in Christ, cannot believe in him cordially: for nothing is plainer, than that without the assent of the understanding there can be no yielding of the heart. The Infidel will very cheerfully take this labour off my hands; and boast, that he yields neither his understanding, nor his heart, to the Redeemer. Of course, he places himself under mere Law; and must therefore find justification, and consequent acceptance, to him impossible. When I say impossible to him, you will undoubtedly understand me to mean, that it is impossible for him to be justified, or accepted, *in his present character*, or *on his avowed principles.* I do not mean, that his understanding, or his heart, cannot be changed: for, though I regard Infidelity as a very dangerous and alarming character, yet I do not believe every Infidel to be of course a final reprobate. Infidel have undoubtedly been changed into Christians; and in some instances have become exemplary Ministers of the Gospel. Infidels voluntarily place themselves under mere law; and reject with scorn, as well as obstinacy, an interest in the blessings of Redemption. Under that Law, however, even after it is narrowed by all his own indefensible limitations, the Infidel has still committed innumerable sins; sins, for which he himself cannot atone, and for which he will not ask, nor even accept, the atonement, made by the Redeemer. By the Law he chooses to be tried; and by the Law he cannot fail to be condemned. The God of truth in that day will declare, that he has sinned; and, according with his own choice, must consign him to perdition. Such is the situation, to which he volunta-

rily reduces himself, and which he prefers to Christ, with all his infinite blessings.

Secondly, Speculative unbelief is the proper character of multitudes, who admit the reality of divine Revelation. Those, who in modern language are called *Unitarians*, deny the Deity; and therefore deny, either explicitly or implicitly, the Atonement of the Saviour. *Dr. Priestly*, and, I presume all his followers, deny the Atonement expressly: Some of the *Socinians* and *Arians* have admitted it; but, I think, inconsistently with their commanding doctrines. The disbelief of the atonement of Christ has the same practical influence with that of the disbelief of his Mediation at large. If he is only a Prophet, and a Pattern of Righteousness; I see not, that he can be any more a Saviour to mankind, than *Moses*, *Isaiah*, and *Paul*. He was indeed a wiser and better man. But it will not be denied, that all these men were saved; nor that, therefore, their righteousness was such, as, if we faithfully imitate it, would secure *our* salvation; that is, according to this *Unitarian* scheme. Nor will it be denied by any man, that the instructions of *Moses* and *Isaiah* are such, as, if faithfully obeyed, will insure salvation. Nor can it be doubted, that *Paul* has taught mankind more of the Gospel, than Christ himself personally taught. To believe in Christ, therefore, is substantially the same thing, as to believe in *Paul*, *Isaiah*, or *Moses*. Yet, although we are required to believe all these men, and all other Prophets and Apostles, as being inspired by God; we are no where required to believe *in* them, or *on* them. They are no where styled the Saviours, or Redeemers, of Mankind. On the contrary, we are expressly told, that there is no other Saviour of Men, but Jesus Christ; and that *there is Salvation in no other*. There is, therefore, something in Christ, wholly different from any thing in these men; and that something constitutes his peculiar and essential character, as *the Saviour of Mankind*. As Christ is expressly declared to have been *the Propitiation for the sins of men, to have made his soul an offering for sin*, and *to have redeemed us with his blood;* and as we are said to *have Redemption, even the forgiveness of our sins, through faith in his blood;* it is unanswerably evident, that in this wonderful particular He differs totally from all other persons, of whom we have any knowledge. To disbelieve his atonement, therefore, is to refuse belief in his peculiar, distinguishing, and essential character, as the Saviour of Mankind. Of course, this scheme shuts out all the benefits of Christ's Redemption; and places mankind again under Law. But *by works of Law no flesh can be justified;* and, therefore, by this scheme no flesh can be saved.

There are, indeed, Unitarians of both these classes, who acknowledge the atonement of Christ; but who yet in effect deny it, by the necessary consequences of their leading principles. Concerning these men I have no more to say, at present, than that the hearts of some persons are sounder than their heads; and that, al-

though their leading principles by their proper influence destroy the hopes of salvation, yet, as all errors, which are imbibed, are not obeyed, and, as among such errors the leading principles of men may, for aught I know, be sometimes included; I am disposed to entertain better hopes concerning them, than I should feel myself authorized by these principles, considered by themselves, to indulge.

3dly. *Practical Unbelief, also, equally cuts off the hope of Salvation.*

We become partakers of the benefits of Christ's Redemption only by exercising evangelical, or cordial, faith in him, as the Redeemer. It is to no purpose, that we believe the several records, given us in the Scriptures concerning his incarnation, life, preaching, miracles, death, resurrection, and exaltation. It is to no purpose, that we believe him to be a Divine Person, the real and all-sufficient Saviour; *able*, willing, and faithful, *to save unto the uttermost all that will come unto God by him.* All this, and all other, speculative faith is to no purpose; if we stop here. It is indeed a step towards Salvation, and a necessary step; but it is one step only; and, if no more be taken, we shall never arrive at the end of the Christian progress. In addition to this, we must with the heart confide in Christ, and his Righteousness; and cheerfully trust our souls in his hands. This, the practical unbeliever does not; and, so long as he continues to be of this character, cannot do.

Let every practical, as well as every speculative, unbeliever, then, remember, that by his own choice, by his voluntary refusal to receive Christ as his Saviour, he cuts himself off from justification, and consequently from immortal life. Every one of these men has broken the Law of God, and sinned against him in innumerable instances of great and dreadful iniquity. Every one infinitely needs forgiveness, and salvation. At the bar of God, how terrible will be the remembrance of this voluntary perdition; this suicide of the soul!

Repent, therefore, every one of you, and believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins. Repent *now. Behold, now is the accepted time! behold, now is the day of Salvation!* If Repentance, if Faith, be not now your duty; they can never be. Now therefore, *if* you intend ever to *hear his voice, even while it is called to-day, harden not your hearts. Boast not yourselves of to-morrow; for you know not what* evils another *day may bring forth.* Now you are called to repentance, faith, and holiness; and invited to eternal life. To-morrow you may be summoned to the grave, and to the judgment. To-day you are before the mercy-seat, surrounded with blessings, in the presence of a forgiving God, and at the feet of a crucified Saviour. To-morrow, nay, this very night *your souls may be required of you;* your probation ended; your account given; the final sentence pronounced against you; and your souls consigned to suffering and sorrow, which shall know no end.

SERMON XXXV.

THE CHRISTIAN SYSTEM GROUNDED ON THE RELIGION OF NATURE, AND INTRODUCED BY CHRIST.

DIVINITY OF CHRIST.—PROOF FROM THE NAMES GIVEN TO HIM.

ROMANS viii. 3, 4.—*For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned Sin in the flesh; That the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

For God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and of a sin-offering, hath condemned sin in the flesh, (the thing impossible to the Law, because it was weak through the flesh:) That the righteousness of the Law may be fulfilled by us, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.
Dr. Macknight's Translation.

IN my last discourse I endeavoured to show, *that Man could not be justified, and of course could not be saved, by works of Law.* The plain and necessary result of the establishment of this doctrine is, either *that he cannot be saved at all;* that is, he cannot be happy in a future existence; or *that he must be saved by some other, than the Legal, Dispensation.* The Scriptures inform us, that the latter part of this alternative is the true one: and declare, *that Salvation, or future happiness, is attainable by Man.* This subject, then, infinitely interesting to every child of *Adam;* this subject, boundlessly great, sublime, and glorious; immensely honourable to God, and inestimably beneficial to man; becomes the next object of our inquiry.

It ought, perhaps, to be observed here, and certainly ought to be remembered, that our preceding investigation has been confined chiefly to what is commonly called THE RELIGION OF NATURE. By this I intend *the same with that, which was* THE RELIGION OF ADAM *in Paradise;* or, generally, *the Religion of beings placed under Law only. The truths to be believed, and the duties to be done, by beings, placed under the Law of God,* constitute the System, which we call NATURAL RELIGION. This Religion is found no where, clearly explained, and solemnly sanctioned, except in the Scriptures. In them it is presented to us in its perfect form, and with its proper lustre. In all the exhibitions of Philosophy it is defective, mutilated, and deformed with superadded features, created only by the imperfect reasonings, and wild imagination, of Man. In the Scriptures it is disclosed in its native beauty, freed from every defect and every mixture.

On this system, CHRISTIANITY, properly so called, is erected. By Christianity I intend *The Religion of fallen Beings; a Religion furnishing effectual means of Redemption from their Apostacy, guilt, and punishment; and of their restoration to the favour of God, to virtue, and to future happiness. The means provided for this end; the truths to be believed, and the duties to be done, by such beings, in order to their escape from sin, condemnation, and misery, and their attainment of justification, holiness, and happiness;* constitute the sum and substance of *the Christian Religion.*

To such beings as we are, fallen from the favour of God, polluted with immoveable guilt, and destined to die for ever, under the Law which we have broken, such a Religion is plainly of infinite importance. From the bare contemplation of the subject one would think, that the tidings, communicated by such a Religion, must be welcome to Mankind, beyond degree. Every thing which they need; every thing which they can reasonably wish; every thing which can purify, adorn, or bless, them; which can make them useful and comfortable here, or happy and glorious hereafter; it announces from the mouth of God. By such beings it ought certainly to be received *as tidings of great joy unto all people.*

In the text *the great and commanding doctrines of this Religion are briefly declared;* and these are the following:

I. *That it was impossible for the Law to condemn, or, in other words, destroy sin in men, while in the state of nature, or under the legal Dispensation.*

II. *That God has accomplished this great work by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, as an offering for sin.*

III. *That this was done, in order that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled by those, who under the influence of the Gospel live lives of new obedience.*

It will be easily seen, that these three great propositions contain the substance of Christianity; that they teach our Ruined Condition under the Law; our Recovery by Christ; and our Duty and Obedience in the Christian Character.

The first of these propositions, *that it was impossible for the Law to destroy sin in Man, while in the flesh; or to furnish Redemption to apostate beings;* has been already considered at length in the preceding discourses. This is the state, in which Christianity found Man, and took the charge of his concerns. On this state Christianity is erected, as on its proper foundation; and but for this state appears, in my view at least, to have neither use, explanation, nor meaning.

The second proposition is now to become the subject of discussion. As it is a proposition of vast extent, and contains a great many particulars of vast importance, demanding severally a minute examination; it will furnish an ample field for many discourses.

In this proposition it is asserted, *that God has accomplished the*

great work of destroying sin in Man by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, as an offering for sin.

The first inquiry, excited by this assertion, is, WHAT IS THE CHARACTER OF THE PERSON, *thus sent?*

The second, WHAT HAS HE DONE? and,

The third, HOW HAS HE DESTROYED SIN IN MAN?

In this order I propose to consider these highly interesting subjects.

In the first place, I will proceed to investigate THE CHARACTER OF THE PERSON, WHO WAS THUS SENT.

The character, given of him in the text, is plainly a singular one. He is called *God's Own Son*, and is yet said *to have been sent in the likeness of sinful flesh.* These two great particulars, so unlike, so contrasted, form a character, differing altogether from every other; and demand a very diligent consideration. The first of them shall be the immediate object of our attention.

At our entrance upon the investigation of this subject, *the first thing* which strikes the mind is, that *it is a subject of mere Revelation.* Without the Scriptures there is no knowledge, in this world, that such a person exists. The Philosopher, therefore, has no other concern with this subject, except either to believe, or disbelieve, the testimony which the Scriptures give. By his own Reason he can add nothing to what is revealed, and without impiety he can alter nothing.

Secondly, As Revelation communicates to us our original knowledge of this subject, *so it communicates to us, all, which we now know.* The things, which it testifies, were not designed to be, neither can they become, the materials of future, philosophical investigation and improvement. The knowledge, which at this day exists concerning this subject, is all found in the Bible.

Thirdly, The things, communicated concerning it, being communicated, not in the words which Man's wisdom teacheth, but in those which the Holy Ghost teacheth, are communicated in the best and wisest manner possible; the manner which was approved by infinite Wisdom. There is no error, no oversight; nothing superfluous, nothing defective. That, and that only, is taught, which God thought it proper to teach, in the manner, which God thought it proper to adopt.

Fourthly, As the doctrines concerning this singular Person are of the highest moment to plain uneducated men, as well as to men of learning, it is certain, *that the things, really revealed, are so revealed, that such men, acting with integrity, can understand them, sufficiently to make them proper and useful objects of their Faith.* Of course, the terms, in which they are revealed, are used in such a manner, as these men can understand. *They are, therefore, used according to their plain, customary, obvious, meaning; the meaning, which they have in the usual intercourse of Mankind.* Of course, also, they have no technical, philosophical, or peculiar,

signification'; because, if thus used, they could never be understood by such men; or, in other words, by almost the whole body of Mankind.

Fifthly, Just so much is revealed concerning this extraordinary person, as it is useful for us to know. This truth is derived, with absolute certainty, from the Wisdom and Goodness of God. Whatever is revealed is revealed by this wisdom and goodness; and whatever is withheld is by the same wisdom and goodness withheld. That which is revealed, therefore, we are required by the authority of God to believe; and are bound to have no reference in our faith to that, which is withheld. Whatever mysteries may be inferred, or may seem to be inferred, from the things, actually revealed, can in no manner affect them; and ought in no manner to affect our faith in them. All that is taught is exactly true, and to be faithfully believed; although all that is true is not taught; nor capable of being divined by such minds as ours.

Sixthly, Whatever is contained in the Scriptures concerning this subject, as concerning every other, that is, *in the Scriptures as they now are, is to be regarded as unquestionably the Word of God, unless proved not to be genuine by manuscript authority.* Nothing is to be admitted with respect to this subject, which would not be justifiably admitted with respect to any other Scriptural subject. Particularly, all conjectural emendations of the text are to be rejected with scorn; as miserable attempts to mend the Word of God according to the dictates of human philosophy. The reasonableness of this rule is too obvious to need illustration.

With these observations premised, I proceed to examine the Character of this singular Person, denoted by the phrase, *God's own Son.*

The Scriptures are undoubtedly the best commentators on themselves, wherever they professedly undertake to explain their own language. Christ has, in many instances, called himself the Son of God; and in many more, (which is exactly equivalent) has declared God to be his father. In one of these instances the *Jews* attempted to kill him for challenging this character. The words which he used were, *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore*, says the Evangelist, in the following verse, *the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also, that God was his father, making himself equal with God.* John v. 17, 18. We have here the comment of the Evangelist on Christ's meaning in adopting this language; and it is no other than this: *That in declaring God to be his Father, he made himself equal with God.* No comment can be plainer, or more decisive. But we have, further, the comment of Christ himself: for such it ought undoubtedly to be esteemed. He had healed the impotent man at the pool of *Siloam* on the Sabbath day. The *Jews sought to kill him* for this action. He justified himself by this remarkable declaration, *My father worketh hitherto, and I work:* that

is, My Father worketh hitherto on the Sabbath day, in his providence: I, who am his Son, work also in the same manner, and with the same authority; being *Lord of the Sabbath* even as he is. In the following part of the context, to cut off all room for misconception concerning the import of this phraseology, and the character claimed in it, he informs the *Jews* in the verses immediately following, that *he does all things which the Father does;* that *the Father shews him all things, which himself does;* that *he has life in himself, even as the Father has life in himself;* that, *as the Father gives life to whom he pleases, so does the Son;* that *it is the will of the Father, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour himself;* that *those, who do not thus honour the Son, do not honour the Father;* that *the Son is constituted the only Judge of the quick and the dead;* and that *all, who are in the graves, shall hear, and obey, his voice, and come forth to the Resurrection, either of life, or damnation.* Such is the comment of the Evangelist on this phrase; such are the proofs, that it is uttered in its simple and obvious meaning. Who would imagine, that this meaning could be differently understood by different readers, or be mistaken by any reader?

In John x. 30, Christ said to the *Jews* assembled around him, *I and my Father are one.* The unity, here challenged, seems not to have offended them; (see verse 36) but they attempted to stone him, because he said *I am the Son of God;* as he informs us in the verse last mentioned. Upon being asked by him, for what good work they stoned him; they replied, *For a good work we stone thee not, but blasphemy, because thou, being a man, makest thyself God.* It will be admitted by all men, who believe the Bible, that Christ was a person of irreproachable benevolence and integrity. The *Jews* declared to him, as the Reason why they were about to stone him, *that in saying, he was the Son of God, he being a Man, made himself God.* If then they had misapprehended his meaning, a very moderate share of benevolence and integrity must have compelled him to undeceive them; much more must the perfect integrity and benevolence of Christ have produced this effect. It is impossible that he should be justified in voluntarily suffering this imputed blasphemy to rest upon *his good name;* and to prevent, as it could not fail to prevent, their reception of his doctrines, precepts, and mission. This would have been voluntarily to *lay a fatal stumbling-block, or offence, before them:* but he himself has said, *Wo to that man, by whom the offence cometh.* It would, also, have been voluntarily to leave *the full impression of a falsehood, uttered by himself, on their minds;* which would be the same, in a moral view, as to utter intentionally the same falsehood. Finally; under this mistake they were about to murder him; a crime which he certainly could not fail of preventing, if they were influenced to commit it merely by mistaking his meaning; a thing so easily rectified by his own explanation. It is certain, then, that they did not mistake his meaning.

But, to put the matter beyond all doubt, he himself has settled the point. *If*, said he, *I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.**

The same subject of controversy arose again, when Christ stood as a prisoner before the *Sanhedrim*. After attempting in vain to prove him guilty of any crime by various means, *Caiaphas* put him upon oath, to tell the *Sanhedrim whether he was the Christ, the Son of God*. Christ immediately replied in the affirmative. *The high Priest then rent his clothes; and declared, that he had spoken blasphemy;* viz. the very blasphemy of which the *Jews had before accused him for the very same declaration;* and the *Sanhedrim* pronounced him *guilty of death*. Here, as in the former case, Christ went on to challenge, unequivocally, the character denoted by this phrase; and said, *Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of Heaven*. Thus we have the comment of *St. John* on this phrase; declaring, *that Christ in using it made himself equal with God:* the comment of the *Jewish people and Sanhedrim;* declaring *that Christ in using it was guilty of blasphemy, because, that, being a man, he thus made himself God;* and Christ himself, according directly with this interpretation of it, justifying his own use of it with this meaning, and bringing irresistible proofs, that he applied it, thus understood, to himself, with the most absolute truth and propriety. If we allow the language, here used, to be used in the customary and obvious manner, the only manner in which it could be understood by those to whom it was addressed, and in which it can be understood by ninety-nine hundredths of those who read it; nay, further, if we do not assign it a meaning, which each man must laboriously contrive for himself, because the obvious meaning does not suit his own system; or must receive from another, who has for the same reason contrived it in this manner; we must admit all this to be clearly and unquestionably said, and to determine the meaning of this phrase in the text, beyond any rational debate.

If I have satisfactorily settled the meaning of this phrase, the Text contains, among other things, the following important Doctrine:

That Jesus Christ is truly and perfectly God. This doctrine I shall attempt to maintain by a variety of considerations, arranged in the following manner.

I. *I shall attempt to show, that Christ is spoken of in the Scriptures as the true and perfect God:*

II. *That the Deity of Christ is the only ground of consistency in the scheme of Redemption:*

III. *That the Jews, according to the opposite doctrine, are unjustly charged with guilt in putting Christ to death.*

* That the Jews understood Christ to confirm *their* construction of his words is certain; for St. John says that they now sought again to take him.

IV. *That the Prophets and Apostles, according to the same doctrine, cannot be vindicated from the sin of leading Mankind into idolatry:*

V. *To these arguments from the Scriptures, I propose in another place, to subjoin several testimonies to the same doctrine from Jews, Christians, and Heathens.*

I. *I shall attempt to show, that Christ is spoken of in the Scriptures as the true and perfect God.*

This argument may be advantageously exhibited by showing,

I. *That the Names of God;*

II. *That the Attributes of God;*

III. *That the Actions of God;* and

IV. *That the Relations, which God sustains to his creatures, are in the Scriptures ascribed to Christ;* and,

V. *That divine worship is in the Scriptures required to be rendered, and by persons inspired was actually rendered, to Christ.*

I. *The Names of God are in the Scriptures ascribed to Christ.*

1st. *He is directly called God.*

John i. 1, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* In this passage *St. John* not only declares Christ to be God, but to be eternal. *In the beginning was the Word.* And in the following verse he declares that he is co-eternal with God: *The same was in the beginning with God:* Words exactly equivalent to those in Proverbs viii. 22, 23, where the same truth is also asserted: *The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way; before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting; from the beginning; or ever the earth was.* In the following verse the Evangelist further declares, that Christ was the Creator of the Universe, and that *without him was not even one thing made, which has been made.** In this passage of Scripture *St. John* has not only declared, that Christ is God; but, to prevent any possible mistake concerning what he meant by the word *God*, has told us, that he is co-eternal with God the Father; and that he is the Creator of every thing, which exists. Were the Scriptures allowed to speak their own language, this single passage would decide the controversy: for it is impossible to declare in stronger language, or more explicit, that Christ is God in the highest sense, originally, and without derivation.

Romans ix. 5, *Of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed, for ever. Amen.* This passage cannot be avoided, by any means except a resolute denial.

1 Timothy iii. 16, †*Without controversy great is the mystery of Godliness. God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of Angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world,*

* See the Original.

† These Sermons were written before the results of Griesbach and others were extensively known in this country. The author was satisfied from an examination of these results, that the common is the genuine reading of the text.

and received up into glory. Nothing is more evident, than that these things are said of Christ, and that they can be said of no other. *No other person, and no attribute,* can be said to be *God, manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of Angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up into glory.* Let any person make the experiment: and he will find it impossible to make the application of all these things to any other, than the Redeemer.

Matthew i. 23, and Isaiah vii. 14, *Behold a Virgin shall conceive, and shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Emmanuel;* that is, *God with us.* Christ, therefore, is *God with us.*

2 Peter i. 1, *To them, that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ.* According to the original, *of our God and Saviour, Jesus Christ;* τε Θεε ἡμων, και Σωτηρος, Ιησε, Χριςε. The common translation is a violation of the Greek; and, besides, it *is through the Righteousness of Christ only,* that *the precious faith* of the Apostles, and other good men, is *obtained.* Jesus Christ is, therefore, *our God and Saviour.*

Psalm xlv. 6, 7, quoted in Hebrews i. 8, 9, *Unto the Son he saith, thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity: therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.* This is addressed by God the Father to the Son. The Father, therefore, has thought proper to call the Son, God. Who can question the propriety of the application? That we may be assured, that he is called God in the full and perfect sense, he declares, that *the throne of the Son is for ever and ever.* To whom, but God in the absolute sense, can an everlasting throne, or dominion, be attributed?

Revelation xxi. 5—7, *And he that sat upon the throne said, behold I make all things new; and he said unto me, I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.* That it is Christ, who is spoken of in this passage, is evident by a comparison of Rev. i. 11, and Rev. iii. 21. In the former of these passages Christ says, *I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.* In the latter he says, *To him, that overcometh, I will give to sit on my throne; even as I overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.* In Rev. xx. 11, 12, we are informed, that John *saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the heavens and the earth fled away, and there was found no place for them;* and *that he saw the dead, small and great, stand before God.* He that sat upon the throne in Rev. xxi. 5, is plainly the same person, who in chap. xx. 11, is exhibited as sitting on the great white throne; and this person we certainly know to be Christ: because *the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son;* and because the throne, here

spoken of, is the throne of final judgment. In the second and third of these passages Christ declares himself to be *the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, or the beginning and the end;* and *to be set down upon the throne of his Father.* In the first passage *he* declares, that *he will be a God to him that overcometh.* In the last he is declared by the *Evangelist* to be God.

There are many other passages, in which Christ is directly called God. But these are sufficient to establish the point.

2dly. Christ is called the GREAT GOD.

Titus ii. 13, *Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of the Great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.* In the Greek it is *the Great God even our Saviour Jesus Christ*, or our Great God and Saviour Jesus Christ. God the Father will not appear at the judgment. If then, Christ is not *the Great God;* God will not appear at the judgment at all. Και, the conjunction here used, is rendered exactly, in many cases, by the English word *Even;* particularly in the phrase *God and our Father*, found Gal. i. 4, 1 Thess. i. 3, 2 Thess. ii. 16, &c. In the last of these places the Translators have rendered it *even*, as they plainly ought to have done in both the others: since the present rendering makes the Apostle speak nonsense.

3dly. *Christ is called the True God.*

1 John v. 20, *In his son Jesus Christ. This*, in the original, *This Person, is the true God and eternal life.* If this passage admits any comment, it must be that of *Christ himself;* who says, *I am* THE *life;* and that of *the Evangelist:* who in the first chapter of this Epistle, and second verse, says, *For the Life was manifested; and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal Life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.*

4thly. *Christ is called the Mighty God.*

Psalms l. 1—3, *The mighty God, even the Lord hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.* This Psalm is a prediction of the last Judgment. In the first verse, the Person, who comes to judge the world, and who speaks the things, recorded in this Psalm, is called AL, ALEIM, JEHOVAH; and is exhibited as calling mankind before him *from the rising of the sun to his going down.* In the second, he is represented as *shining*, or displaying his glory, *out of Zion;* that is, by his dispensations to his Church. In the third, is described the awful splendour, with which he will appear, the fire which shall consume, and the convulsion which shall rend asunder, the world, at that great and terrible day. But Christ alone will appear on that day; and at his presence *the heavens shall pass away with a great noise;* and by *the flaming fire*, with which he will be surrounded, *the elements will melt with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein*

will be burnt up. Christ, therefore, is the GOD, the MIGHTY GOD, the JEHOVAH, who is here mentioned.

Isaiah ix. 6, *For unto us a Child is born; unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulders: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Father of the everlasting age, the Prince of Peace.* This child, this Son, is *the Mighty God; the Father of the everlasting age, and the Prince of Peace.* He who admits, that a child, a son, is the mighty God, will certainly admit, that this can be no other than Christ. He, who does not, will charge *Isaiah* with uttering falsehood.

The same name, *Wonderful*, is also given to him by himself, when appearing as an Angel; or rather as *the Angel*, to *Manoah* and *his Wife*, Judges xiii. 18, *And the Angel of the Lord said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name; seeing it is secret:* in the *Hebrew, seeing it is Wonderful:* the same word being used in both these passages. The Hebrew words, which are translated *the Angel of the Lord*, may be literally rendered THE ANGEL-JEHOVAH, or JEHOVAH-ANGEL: that is, He, who, though JEHOVAH, is yet a MESSENGER.* For this view of the subject the Scriptures themselves furnish the most ample authority.

In *Isaiah* xlviii. 12, and onward, we have these words: *Hearken unto me, O Jacob, and Israel my called. I am He; I am the first, I also am the last. Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens. I call unto them: they stand up together. Come ye near unto me; hear ye this: I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I. And now the* LORD *God and his Spirit hath sent me. Thus saith the* LORD, *thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: I am the* LORD *thy God.* Here the Person speaking informs us that *he is the First and the Last; that he has founded the earth, and spanned the heavens; that he is* JEHOVAH *God, the Redeemer, and the Holy One of Israel;* and yet he says, *that the Lord Jehovah and his Spirit hath sent him;* or, as *Origen* and *Lowth* translate it, *The Lord* JEHOVAH *hath sent me and his Spirit.* The Person sending, therefore, is JEHOVAH; *and the Person sent is also* JEHOVAH.

The same Person, under the appearance, and by the name of a Man, *wrestled with Jacob at Peniel, and there gave him the name Israel*, or *a Prince of God:* assigning for it this remarkable reason: *For as a Prince hast thou power with God, and with men, and hast prevailed.* After asking his name, and receiving a blessing from him, (upon which he departed) *Jacob called the name of the place Peniel; for, said he, I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.*

This Person is called by *Hosea, God, the Angel, and* JEHOVAH. *He had power with God; yea, he had power over the Angel, and*

* See *Horsley's* New Translation of Hosea. Appendix.

prevailed. He had wept, and made supplication unto him. He found him in Bethel; and there he spake with us, even JEHOVAH, *God of Hosts. Horsley*, whose biblical opinions will rarely be disputed with success, has the following observations on this subject. "This *Man*, therefore, of the book of *Genesis*, this *Angel* of *Hosea*, who wrestled with *Jacob*, could be no other than the JEHOVAH-ANGEL, of whom we so often read in the English Bible, under the name of the *Angel of the* LORD." A phrase of an unfortunate structure, and so ill conformed to the original, that, it is to be feared, it has led many into the error of conceiving of *the* LORD as one person, and of *the Angel* as another. The word of the Hebrew, ill rendered "*the* LORD," is not, like the English word, an appellative, expressing rank, or condition; but it is the proper name JEHOVAH. And this proper name JEHOVAH is not, in the *Hebrew*, a genitive after the noun substantive "Angel," as the English represent it; but the words יהוה, and מלאך, "JEHOVAH," and "Angel," are two substantive nouns, in apposition; both speaking of the same person; the one by the appropriate name of the Essence; the other by a title of Office. "JEHOVAH-ANGEL" would be a better rendering. The JEHOVAH-ANGEL of the Old Testament is no other than He, who, in the fulness of time, *was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary.*

According to the scheme of these observations, *Manoah* understood the character of *the Angel who appeared unto him:* for he said unto his Wife, verse 22, *We shall surely die, because we have seen God.* In the same manner is the same Person presented to us, Malachi iii. 1, *Behold, I will send my Messenger, and he shall prepare the way, before me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple; even the Angel of the covenant whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts.* In Luke vii. 27, Christ speaking of *John* the *Baptist*, says, *This is he, of whom it is written, Behold I send my Messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee. John* the *Baptist* was, therefore, *the Messenger, who was to prepare the way; and the Lord, even the Angel of the covenant, was Christ.* The person, also, speaking, who is here called JEHOVAH OF HOSTS, and who says, this Messenger shall prepare the way before himself, is also Christ.

5thly. *Christ is called the God of Israel.*

Exodus xxiv. 9, 10, *Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. And they saw the God of Israel.* Psalm lxviii. 17, 18, *The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of Angels. The Lord is among them, as in Sinai, even the holy place. Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for Men.* Ephesians iv. 8, *Wherefore he saith, When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto Men. Now that he ascended, what is it, but that he descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same, also, that ascended up far*

above all heavens, that he might fill all things, and he gave some Apostles, and some prophets, &c. Here *the Apostle* informs us, *that the person, who ascended on high, and led captivity captive, is Christ. The Psalmist* informs us, that the person, *who ascended on high, and led captivity captive*, is the *Lord, who appeared in Sinai.* And *Moses* informs us, that *the Lord, who appeared in Sinai*, was *the God of Israel.* We also know, *that no man hath seen God*, the Father, *at any time.* Christ therefore is *the God of Israel.* Of course, *the God of Israel*, so often mentioned in the Old Testament, is every where, peculiarly Christ.

6thly. *Christ is called* JEHOVAH.

On this subject *Horsley* observes, "The word JEHOVAH, being descriptive of the Divine Essence, is equally the name of every one of the Three Persons in that Essence. The compound JEHOVAH-SABAOTH belongs properly to the second Person, being his appropriate demiurgic title; describing, not merely *the Lord of such armies, as military leaders bring into the field*, but the unmade, self-existent Maker and Sustainer of the whole array and order of the Universe."

Isaiah vi. 1, and 3, *In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw* JEHOVAH* *sitting on his throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the Temple, and one of the Seraphim cried to another, and said, Holy, Holy, Holy, is Jehovah of Hosts:* and again, in the 5th, 8th, 11th, and 12th verses of the same chapter. *St. John*, quoting the 9th and 10th verses of this chapter, in his Gospel, chapter xii. 40, says, *These things said Esaias, when he saw his*, that is, Christ's *glory, and spake of him.* To prove beyond controversy, that Christ is the JEHOVAH OF HOSTS, here mentioned, I observe that no person is spoken of in the chapter, except *Uzziah*, JEHOVAH OF HOSTS, *the Seraphim, the prophet Isaiah, and the people of Israel. The Seraphim and the people of Israel*, being mentioned only in the aggregate, must be laid out of the question. Christ, therefore, being, by the decision of the Evangelist, spoken of in this chapter, must be either the prophet himself, King *Uzziah*, or JEHOVAH OF HOSTS. It happens also, unfortunately for *Unitarians*, that the prophet saw the glory of no other person, but JEHOVAH OF HOSTS; yet *St. John* assures us, he saw the glory of Christ. *St. John's opinion* on this subject we cannot mistake, if we remember, that he commences his Gospel in this manner: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

Isaiah xl. 3, *The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of* JEHOVAH, *make straight in the desert, a highway for our God. John the Baptist*, when asked by the Messengers of the *Sanhedrim, Who art thou?* answered, John i. 23, *I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the* LORD, *as saith the Prophet Esaias. St. Matthew*, speaking of John

* Lowth's Notes on this Verse

the Baptist, chapter iii. 3, says, *This is he that was spoken of by Esaias the Prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the* LORD, *make his paths straight.* From these passages, compared, it is evident, that Christ, before whom *John* cried, was *the* LORD, whose way he directed thus to be prepared in the wilderness; *the* JEHOVAH, spoken of by the Prophet; *the Jehovah of Hosts*, who said, *Malachi* iii. 1, *Behold, I will send my messenger before* MY *face, and he shall prepare the way before* ME.

Exodus iii. 2—6, *And the* ANGEL-JEHOVAH *appeared unto him, in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and behold the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burned. And when* JEHOVAH *saw, that he turned aside to see,* GOD *called unto him, out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses! And he said, Here am I. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy Father, the* GOD *of Abraham, the* GOD *of Isaac, and the* GOD *of Jacob. And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.* In this passage we are informed, that the ANGEL-JEHOVAH appeared *to Moses, in the burning bush,* and said to him, *I am the* GOD *of Abraham, the* GOD *of Isaac, and the* GOD *of Jacob.* The word *Angel*, as you well know, denotes *a person sent;* and, of course, implies a person sending. The Person here sent is called JEHOVAH, and styles himself *the* GOD *of Abraham.* It needs no words to show, that the Person *sent* cannot be GOD the FATHER; or that he must be the Angel of the Covenant, GOD the SON. Christ therefore is the JEHOVAH, mentioned in this passage, as *the* GOD *of Abraham, the* GOD *of Isaac,* and *the* GOD *of Jacob.*

The application of these peculiar names of the Godhead to our Saviour furnishes, in my view, an unanswerable argument to prove his divinity: for,

1st. In Isaiah xlii. 8, God says, *I am* JEHOVAH, *that is my name, and my glory I will not give to another.*

In this passage, GOD declares, that *he will not give his name*, or glory, both terms meaning here the same thing, *to another.* Yet, in the word of this same God, his several peculiar and distinguishing names are given to Jesus Christ; not indeed communicated to him; but applied to him, as his own original, proper appellations. This we are taught, at large, Exodus xxiii. 20, 21, *Behold I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice; provoke him not: for he will not pardon your transgressions, for* MY NAME *is* IN *him.* Here we are informed, that the *Angel*, sent before the *Israelites*, would not *pardon their transgressions, if they provoked him;* and are thus certainly taught, that he possessed the right and power of pardoning sin. *But who*

can forgive sins, except God? We are further informed, that the *Name* of God is *in* this Angel; not that it is *given*, or *communicated*, to him, but that it *exists in him*, and *belongs to him, originally*. What this Name is, the passage, last quoted from *Isaiah*, declares to us; *I am* JEHOVAH, *that is my Name*. It is also declared, in the same manner, to *Moses*, when asking of God, Exodus iii. 13, What was his *Name*, that he might declare it to the children of *Israel*. *And God said unto Moses*, I AM THAT I AM. *Thus shall ye say unto the children of Israel*, I AM *hath sent me unto you*. It is hardly necessary to remark, that the name I AM has the same import with JEHOVAH. All this is rendered perfectly consistent, and obvious, by the Scriptural accounts of Christ. *I and my Father are one*, said our Saviour to the *Jews*.

For God, therefore, in his own word, to give, or apply, his *name*, or *glory*, to Christ, is not to give it to another; but to apply to Christ names, which are his own proper appellations. But, according to the Unitarian doctrine, this assertion, on the part of God, cannot be true. The doctrine therefore is false; for *Let God be true, but every man a liar;* that is, every man, who opposes God.

2dly. In *Deuteronomy* xxxii. 39, in *Isaiah* xliii. 10, xliv. 6, 8, and xlv. 5, 14, 21, and in various other places, God says, *that there is no God beside him; that there is none else; and that he knows not any*. Yet Christ is called *God*, and announced by other names of the Deity, in the several passages abovementioned, and in many others; and this by the same God, who made this declaration. That he is not so called, in a subordinate, delegated, or derived sense, is unquestionably evident; *first*, from the *titles* given to him, viz. *The True God; The Mighty God; The Great God; The God of Israel; Jehovah;* and *I am;* all of them names, never given in the Scriptures to any being, but the Deity: *secondly*, from the *things ascribed to Christ* in the same passages; many of which, as you must have observed, cannot be predicated of any being, except the one living and true God.

If it be admitted, then, that the Scriptures speak language which is to be understood in its customary sense, the only sense in which it can be intelligible to those to whom it was addressed, and to ninety-nine hundredths of those for whom the Scriptures were written; if it be admitted, that God has chosen the most proper terms to communicate true ideas of himself to mankind; it cannot be denied, *that Jesus Christ is truly, and perfectly*, GOD.

SERMON XXXVI.

DIVINITY OF CHRIST.—PROOFS FROM THE ATTRIBUTES AND ACTIONS ASCRIBED TO HIM.

ROMANS viii. 3, 4.—*For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned Sin in the flesh; That the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

For God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and of a sin-offering, hath condemned sin in the flesh, (the thing impossible to the Law, because it was weak through the flesh:) That the righteousness of the Law may be fulfilled by us who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

Dr. Macknight's Translation.

IN the preceding discourse I observed, that the great and commanding doctrines of Christianity are briefly declared in this passage of Scripture; and, as such, recited the following:

I. *That the Law could not destroy Sin in Man:*

II. *That God has accomplished this work by sending his own Son into the world:*

III. *That this was done, in order that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled by Christians.*

As the *first* of these propositions had been sufficiently discussed; I proposed, in a series of Sermons, to examine the *second;* and to commence the examination *by inquiring into the character of him, who is here called* GOD'S OWN SON. After reciting several scriptural comments on this phrase, I asserted, that it contains the following important Doctrine:

That Jesus Christ is truly and perfectly God.

This doctrine I proposed to illustrate under several heads of Discourse, then specified; the first of which was,

That Christ is spoken of, in the Scriptures, as the True and Perfect God.

The argument, contained in this proposition, I proposed to exhibit by showing, that the

Names,

Attributes, and

Actions of God, together with the

Relations, which he sustains to his creatures, are in the Scriptures ascribed to Christ; and, *That divine worship is in the Scriptures required to be rendered, and by persons inspired was actually rendered, to him.*

The first of these subjects, viz. *the Names of God*, I then showed, at sufficient length for my design, to be abundantly applied to Christ in the Scriptures. I now propose to exhibit this truth concerning *the Attributes*.

I. *The peculiar attributes of God are ascribed to Christ in the Scriptures.*

1st. *Eternity.*

Revelation i. 10, 11. &c. *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the Last, and I turned to see the voice that spake with me; and, being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and, in the midst of the seven candlesticks, one like unto the Son of Man; and when I saw him I fell at his feet as dead: and he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not, I am the First and the Last, I am he, that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen.*

Revelation ii. 8, *These things saith the First and the Last, who was dead and is alive.*

Isaiah xliv. 6, THUS SAITH JEHOVAH, *King of Israel, and his Redeemer,* JEHOVAH OF HOSTS, *I am the First, and I am the Last, and beside me there is no God.*

Isaiah xlviii. 12, *Hearken unto me, O Jacob, and Israel my called; I am he; I am the First; I also am the Last. Mine hand, also, hath laid the foundation of the earth,* &c.

In the two first of these passages, it will not, for it plainly cannot, be disputed, that the person, spoken of by St. John, and afterwards speaking of himself, *who was like unto the Son of Man who was dead, is alive, and liveth for ever more,* was Christ; and this person in four instances declares himself to be *the First and the Last:* the strongest assertion, that Eternity past, and to come, belongs to himself. If he is *the First*, none can have been before him: if he is *the Last*, none can be after him.

In the two last passages, from the Prophet *Isaiah*, (the latter of which has in the preceding discourse been clearly proved to be written concerning Christ) JEHOVAH OF HOSTS, who declares, that *beside himself there is no God*, declares also, that *He is the First, and that He is the Last.* This language, with mathematical certainty, is attributable to but one being; and that being is the only living and true God.

Proverbs viii. 22, 23, *The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.*

That the Person, here spoken of under the name of Wisdom, is Christ, cannot be rationally questioned by any man, who reads this chapter with attention; especially, if he compares it with the account, given by the same Person, of himself, in the first chapter of the same book; where he exhibits himself as the Judge, and Re-

warder, of mankind. To place the matter out of doubt, *St. Paul* informs us, that *Christ is the Wisdom of God.* But this Person says, *he was set up from everlasting.*

Micah v. 2, *And thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting:* In the Hebrew, *from the days of eternity.* This passage was, in a sense, proverbially, acknowledged by the Jewish nation to be a prophecy of Christ. See Matt. ii. 6, where it is quoted, as such, by the *Pharisees*, in answer to *Herod's* inquiry concerning the birth-place of the Messiah. Besides, God, speaking in the passage itself, says, *Yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me*, &c. Here *He, whose goings forth have been from the days of eternity*, is said by another Person to *come forth unto the Person speaking;* that is, unto God the Father.

John i. 1, 2, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.*

1 John v. 20, *This is the True God, and* or even, *the Eternal Life.*

The names *Jehovah, I am*, and *I am that I am*, already proved to belong to Christ, are also the strongest expressions of original and eternal existence. The phrase, *I am*, Christ in a peculiar manner applies to himself. John viii. 58, *And Jesus said unto them, Verily verily I say unto you, before Abraham was I am.* John viii. 24, *If ye believe not that I am, ye shall die in your sins.* Matthew xxviii. 20, *Lo, I am with you alway*, &c. Here Christ does not say, *Before Abraham was*, I was; or I will be *with you alway;* but *I am*, teaching us explicitly, that past and future are perfectly present to himself; and that his own existence is one present time.

2dly. *Both by these names, and by other ascriptions of Eternity to Christ, he is declared to be underived, or self-existent.*

He who is the First, he whose existence is one present time, necessarily exists only of himself.

3dly. *Omnipotence is directly ascribed to Christ.*

Rev. i. 8, *I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.* In the 11th verse of this chapter Christ utters these words of himself. Either, then, there are two persons, who truly say these things, each of himself; or Christ declares them of himself in both these verses. The choice in this alternative I willingly leave to the Unitarians: for, either way, the great question in debate is determined with equal certainty. If Christ speaks the words in the 8th verse, he is the Almighty; if not, there are two Persons, who are *the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last.* *Origen* comments on these words in the following manner: "And that thou mayest know the Omnipotence of the Father and the Son

to be one and the same, hear *John* speaking in the Revelation in this manner. *These things saith the Lord God, who is, and who was, and who is to come; the Almighty:* for who is the Almighty to come, except Christ?" Origen supposed Ὁ ἐρχόμενος to indicate the coming of Christ at the day of Judgment. Psalm xlv. 3, *Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O Most Mighty.* He who is most mighty is plainly Almighty. Matthew xxviii. 18, *And Jesus came, and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in Heaven and in Earth.* The Greek word here is ἐξουσια; the most proper meaning of which is *authority, control,* or *dominion.* But he, who has the authority, control, or dominion, over all things, unquestionably possesses all power, in the original and absolute sense.

This control was manifested by Christ in the obedience of diseases, life, and death, the elements of this world, and Angels both good and evil, to his command. The manner, in which he exercised his control over all these things, was, it should be remembered, the same, which he used at the creation. In both cases *he spoke, and it was done.* The bread, with which he fed the two companies of four thousand, and five thousand, men, came into existence, just as the Heavens and the Earth had before done, in obedience to his mere pleasure. To the leper he said, *I will; be thou clean;* to the deaf ears, *Be opened;* to the blind, *Receive thy sight;* to the demons, *come out of the man;* and to the winds and waves, *Peace: be still:* as he had before said, *Let there be light;* and was in the same manner obeyed. The most proper mode, however, of exhibiting the Omnipotence of Christ, is to appeal to those acts by which it is peculiarly displayed. When we read John i. 3, *All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made which was made;* and Hebrews i. 2, *Upholding all things by the word of his power*; we are presented with the strongest possible proofs, that his power is unlimited. He, who created, and who upholds, the Universe, plainly can do every thing, which in its nature is possible; and is in the absolute sense Omnipotent.

4thly. *Omniscience is also ascribed to Christ.*

John xxi. 17, *Peter saith unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things.* To this ascription of Omniscience Christ makes no reply; and, therefore, admits it in its full latitude. If it had not been true; it is impossible, that he should have permitted Peter to continue in so dangerous an error.

Matthew xi. 27, *All things are delivered unto me of my Father, and no one knoweth the Son, but the Father: neither knoweth any one the Father, save the Son; and he, to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.* In this passage both *the Omniscience and incomprehensibility* of Christ are declared by himself. He, who knows the Father, is Omniscient. He, who is known only by the Father, is incomprehensible.

No exercise of Omniscience is more peculiarly declaratory of this perfection, than *searching the heart;* and none more peculiarly

challenged by God as his sole prerogative. Accordingly, 1 Kings viii. 39, *Solomon*, addressing himself to God in his prayer at the dedication of the Temple, says, *For thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of Men.* Yet, Revelation ii. 23, Christ says, *And all the churches shall know, that I am he, who searcheth the reins and the hearts:* and *St. John*, chapter ii. 23, 24, says *Now, when he was in Jerusalem, at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men.* Accordingly, in Matthew ix. 4, it is said, *And Jesus, knowing their thoughts:* in Matthew xii. 25, *And Jesus knew their thoughts:* in Luke v. 22, *When Jesus perceived their thoughts:* in Luke vi. 8, *But he knew their thoughts:* in Luke ix. 47, *And Jesus perceiving the thought of their heart:* and in Luke xi. 17, *But he, knowing their thoughts.* In all these passages we have the most absolute proof, that it is the prerogative of Christ to search the heart; and that, therefore, he is the God, to whom *Solomon* prayed. The same truth is also declared in the fullest manner by Christ in each of his messages to the seven Churches, in the verses beginning with *I know thy works*, &c. See Rev. ii. iii.

5thly. *Omnipresence is ascribed to Christ.*

Matthew xviii. 20, *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* This fact, the gathering together of persons in the name of Christ, has from the times of the Apostles yearly existed in many thousands of places. Yet Christ according to his own declaration is in the midst of all these assemblies.

Matthew xxviii. 20, *Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.* Here Christ declares, that *he is with the Apostles, and succeeding Ministers, alway, unto the end of the World.* But Ministers are in a sense scattered through the world. With all these Christ has promised alway to be present.

Unitarians object against this interpretation of this passage that ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος ought to be rendered *unto the end of the age.* To this I answer, *first*, that this phrase is used three times in the Gospel of *St. Matthew* by Christ himself: Matthew xiii. 39, 40, and 49, *The harvest is the end of the World: as therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world:* and again, *So shall it be at the end of the world; the Angel shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just.* These, if I mistake not, are the only instances, in which the phrase is used at all; and in all these, except the passage now in dispute, it certainly signifies *the end of the World*, at the general Judgment. There is no warrant for supposing, that Christ, who used it in this sense in three instances out of four, totally varied his meaning in the fourth instance, without giving any notice of such variation.

Secondly, If the interpretation, contended for, be *admitted;* the passage will still equally declare the truth alleged from it. For,

if Christ was present *alway* with the Apostles, only to the end of the *Jewish* age, he is Omnipresent. They preached throughout a great part of the world. But no being could be present with *them alway*, in these separate and distant regions, but he *who filleth all things*. Ephesians iv. 10.

To avoid the difficulty, which is presented to the *Unitarians* by this passage, Mr. *Belsham*, one of the most considerable *Socinian* writers at the present time, informs us, *that Christ was with St. Paul;* and, I presume therefore, with the other Apostles: since the promise was made personally to them; *by his bodily presence, which yet was invisible.* Accordingly, Christ must be supposed to have been constantly, and most rapidly, flying, throughout that age, from place to place, and from Apostle to Apostle. I cannot but blush for human nature, to see such wretched subterfuges resorted to by a man, styled a *Minister of the Gospel*, as serious comments on the Word of God; for the sake of escaping from the plain meaning of his direct declarations; and for the sake of retaining a system, palpably contradictory to those declarations. What mind does not revolt at such a debasing representation of the Redeemer? Surely this gentleman might have recollected, that *St. Peter* said, *that the Heavens must receive Christ until the times of the restitution of all things:* that St. Paul said, *When he had purged away our sins, by himself on the cross, he sate down at the right hand of the Majesty on high:* that Christ himself said to his disciples, *and now I go my way to Him that sent me;* and to the Father, in his intercessory prayer, *and now I am no more in the world; but these are in the world; and I come to thee.*

But this interpretation will not help the *Unitarians* over the difficulty. He could not, on this plan, be with them *alway;* and therefore his promise could not be fulfilled. Besides, this promise, thus understood, would be scarcely at all applicable to the purpose, for which it was given; viz. *the support and consolation of those, who should disciple, and baptize, all nations: for these, existing in every age, as well as in many countries, unto the real end of the world, need alike the blessing, which is promised.*

This is one of the instances, in which a meaning, laboriously contrived to make the Scriptures accord with a preconceived system, is substituted for the obvious and true one; and may serve as a representative of the rest.

6thly. *Immutability is ascribed to Christ. Hebrews* xiii. 8, *Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.*

Psalm cii. 27, &c. *quoted Hebrews* i. 10, &c. *And thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundations of the Earth, and the Heavens are the works of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest; yea, all of them shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end. This* passage is declared by *St. Paul* to be spoken of Christ, as I shall have

occasion to show more particularly hereafter: and in *both passages* he is declared to possess absolute immutability. On this subject I argue in the following manner:

If Christ is unchangeable; he is so, *either because his faculties are so immensely great, and his character so perfectly good, as to be incapable of change, either by increase or diminution;* or, if the supposition be possible, *because he possesses a mind, which, having originally received all its ideas, is unable, by means of its singular constitution, either to lose any of those which it has received, or, to receive any more;* and which, *having originally possessed a certain degree of energy, and moral worth, is, by its singular nature, also, made incapable in both these respects of any alteration.* No words are necessary to show, that every new idea makes a real change in the recipient; and that, therefore, every Intelligent creature changes of necessity every day, in the manner, which we actually behold.

That Christ is not unchangeable, according to the *latter* of these suppositions, will, I suppose, be admitted without a debate. For though I have made the supposition, it is, I think, clearly inconsistent with the essential nature of an Intelligent being. No such being, turning his mind to the objects, by which thought is excited, can possibly fail of receiving new ideas. Besides, that Christ is not in this manner unchangeable is certain, from Luke ii. 52, *And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.* Here it is asserted, not only that he changed, when twelve years of age, but so perceptibly as to have the change dstinctly marked by those around him.

Therefore, by necessary consequence *he*, concerning whom this attribute is asserted, is infinitely different in nature from the *Infant*, which was born of the *Virgin Mary;* and was united to that Infant by a mysterious union, so as to become one person, denominated, with strict propriety, by the one name *Jesus Christ*, or the *Anointed Saviour.*

II. *The peculiar Actions of God are ascribed to Christ in the Scriptures.*

On this subject I observe,

1st. *That the Creation of all things is ascribed to Christ;*

John i. 3, *By him all things were made; and without him was not even one thing made, which hath been made.*

Colossians i. 16, *For by him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him and for him.*

Hebrews i. 10, quoted from *Psalm* cii. 25, *Thou Lord in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands.*

It has been denied, that this last passage is applied by the Apostle to Christ; but the denial cannot, I think, have proceeded even

from prejudice. It must have resulted from absolute inattention. In the 7th verse the Apostle says, *And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his Ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith,* What? *Two things,* which follow. *The first,* quoted from the xlvth *Psalm,* beginning *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the second,* quoted from *Psalm* cii. and beginning with *Thou Lord in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth:* and these two are coupled by the conjunction Και, or *and.** In this manner the passage has meaning, and syntax; but, without it, has neither. If the passage be not applied to Christ by the Apostle, he departs entirely from his discourse, begun before, and continued after, this passage; that is, carried through the whole chapter; and inserts these three verses, containing, according to this scheme, not even a parenthetical reference to any thing in the chapter, nor indeed to any thing in the whole book. In the mean time, the *and,* by which it is connected with the former quotation, and which determines it, beyond debate, to be a part of the speech of the Father to the Son, makes it, according to this scheme, to be ungrammatical nonsense. Surely such writing ought not to be attributed to the Apostle *Paul;* even if we regard only his character, as a man of understanding. It ought, however, to be remarked, that for the present purpose the passage may be dispensed with, without any disadvantage: those, which remain, being abundantly sufficient to establish the point. In the two former of these passages it is asserted, *that all things in Heaven and in earth, visible and invisible;* nay, *that every thing which has been made,* without the exception even of one; *were created by Jesus Christ:* in the latter, *the heavens and the earth,* the Jewish appropriate phrase to denote the Universe, are declared to be *the work of his hands.*

On these passages I observe, that, if a person, thoroughly acquainted with language, were to sit down purposely to express the proposition, *that Christ created all things,* he could not find words to express it more clearly, and decisively, than those, which convey to us each of these scriptural declarations. *St. John,* particularly, has gone the utmost length, which human language will permit; when, after saying, *And by him all things were made,* he subjoins, *and without him was not even one thing made, which has been made.*

2dly. *The preservation of all things is also ascribed to Christ in the most explicit manner.*

Colossians i. 17, *By him,* that is, *Christ, do all things consist.*

Hebrews i. 1, 2, *God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake unto our fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his son; Whom he hath appointed heir of all things; by whom also he made the worlds: Who, being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power,* &c.

* See an example of the same mode of connexion, Matt. xxiii. 16—18.

On these passages it cannot be necessary to dwell. They plainly have but one meaning: and that meaning is too explicit to admit even of an ingenious misconstruction. The words make it evident, if words can make it evident, that Christ is the Upholder of all things.

3dly. *The Government of all things is, in the same direct and distinct manner, applied to Christ*, Psalm xlv. 6, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.*

The *second Psalm*, throughout, is an illustrious exhibition of the universal dominion of Christ.

The *seventy-second Psalm* is a still more glorious exhibition of the same subject. Here it is said, that *his dominion shall extend from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth; that all Kings shall bow down to him: that all nations shall serve him: that they shall fear him as long as the sun and the moon endure: that his name shall endure, and be blessed, for ever: and that the whole earth shall be filled with his glory.* Amen.

Psalm cx. 1, *The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.*

Psalm viii. 5, *Thou madest him a little* (for a little time) *lower than the Angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour: Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands.* See this passage applied to Christ, Heb. ii. 9.

Isaiah ix. 6, 7, *Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder. And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Father of the everlasting Age, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.*

Daniel vii. 13, 14, *And I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to* THE ANCIENT OF DAYS; *and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom; that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away; and his kingdom that, which shall not be destroyed.*

The same doctrine is pursued throughout the *New Testament* in the same explicit manner. Acts x. 36, *The Word, which he sent to the children of Israel, proclaiming glad tidings of peace by Jesus Christ. This person is Lord of all things.*

Rom. ix. 5, *Of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all things, God blessed for ever and ever. Amen.*

1 Cor. xv. 25, *For he must reign, until he hath put all enemies under his feet.*

Ephesians i. 20, *Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet; and given him to be head over all things unto the Church.*

Philippians ii. 9—11, *Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess, that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

These numerous passages are, comparatively, but a few of those, in which the Scriptures assert the absolute and universal dominion of Christ. I have recited such a number of them, to show, that this doctrine runs through the whole sacred volume. No words can be conceived, which can express absolute and supreme dominion over all beings, and all events, more unequivocally, or more forcibly, than these. The name of Christ is here declared to be *above every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come, in earth and in heaven, in time and in eternity.* All things in all worlds are required to *bow* to him. Angels of every order, as well as men, it is declared, *shall* thus *bow* to him, either voluntarily, or involuntarily; and shall *confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* This dominion also is asserted to be without limits, and without end. I shall only add, from the mouth of Christ himself, *I am the first and the last and the living one. Also I was dead, and behold, I am the living one for ever and ever: and I have the keys of Hades and of Death. I shut, and no one openeth; I open, and no one shutteth:* Rev. i. 17, 18, and iii. 7; and the equivalent passage, Matthew xxviii. 18, *And Jesus came, and spake unto them, saying, All authority in Heaven and in earth is given unto me.* Here Christ asserts, that the rightful exercise of all power in heaven and in earth is in his possession; that he has *the keys of Hades and of Death;* or the absolute control over the world of the dead and the region of departed spirits. From that world, from that region, none of the numberless inhabitants can escape without his permission; but, when the gates are unlocked by him, none can hinder them from coming forth; as at his call they will actually do, on the great and final day.

4thly. *The act of giving and restoring Life is also expressly ascribed to Christ in a variety of ways.*

Particularly, while he resided in this world, *he raised the dead at his pleasure.* The daughter of *Jairus*, the son of the *Widow of Nain*, and his beloved *Lazarus*, were illustrious examples. All these returned again from the world of departed spirits at his command. *Damsel, I say unto thee, Arise; Young man, I say unto thee, Arise; Lazarus, Come forth;* were the only means, which he employed; and the spirits of these deceased persons instantly obeyed the call. This amazing power he accordingly asserts of himself in terms absolute and universal. *As the Father raiseth up and quickeneth, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.* John v. 22. *As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.* In the same manner, St. Paul declares,*

* See also Phil. iii. 21, and Col. iii. 4.

1 Cor. xv. 45, *The first Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was a quickening Spirit.* In a still more striking manner did he exemplify this wonderful power *in raising himself from the dead.* That he did this cannot be doubted, unless we are disposed to doubt the truth of his own express declaration. John x. 17, 18, *Therefore doth my Father love me because I lay down my life that I might take it up again: no one taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again.*

In this passage it is as evident, as words can make it, that *Christ laid down his life*, of his own accord only, and of his own accord *took it up again;* and *that no one was able to take it from him.* Accordingly *St. Peter* declares, Acts ii. 24, that *it was not possible for him to be holden of death.*

Another most wonderful exhibition of this astonishing power will be made by him, as he himself has told us, *in raising up the dead at the last day. And this is the will of Him that sent me, that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.* John vi. 40. And again, verse 56, *Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.* See also verses 39 and 44. John v. 28, *Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation.*

After Christ had ascended to Heaven, the *Apostles*, according to his promise, raised the dead by his power and authority; and thus proved the Ubiquity of his power, as well as of his presence.

As there can be no rational doubt concerning these passages, and no misconstruction of them except by violence; I do not suppose any explanation of them to be necessary. They carry their own meaning perfectly in themselves, and therefore demand no comment. The united language of them all is, that Christ in himself perfectly possesses the power of giving life; that in this world he exercised it on himself, and many others; and that he will most wonderfully display the same power, at the end of this earthly system, by raising to life the great congregation of the dead.

5thly. *The forgiveness of Sin is expressly ascribed to Christ.*

Thus in Exodus xxiii. 20, 21, already quoted for another purpose, it is said, *Behold I send an Angel before thee to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice; provoke him not: for he will not pardon your transgressions; for my name is in him.* In this passage it is evident beyond a doubt, that the *Angel*, who was sent before the *Israelites*, was possessed of the power, and right, to forgive sins. Otherwise God could not have thus cautioned the Israelites not to provoke him, for this reason: since the reason

would not have existed; and would, therefore, have been alleged insincerely. But this cannot be attributed to God. 2 Corinthians ii. 10, *For if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sake forgave I it in the person of Christ.* The Apostle here declares to the *Corinthians*, that *he forgave the offenders*, referred to in his former epistle, *in the person of Christ:* or standing as his representative: but, if Christ could not himself forgive sins, the Apostle might with equal propriety have said, that he forgave it in the person of any other: *the person* of Christ, here, being equivalent to *the name and authority* of Christ; but, if Christ had not the power to forgive sins, this authority would have been nothing. Colossians iii. 13, *Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you.*

The import of this passage will be sufficiently understood, if it can need any explanation, by reciting the parallel passage Eph. iv. 32, *Forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*

Acts vii. 59, 60, *And they stoned Stephen, invocating, and saying, Lord Jesus receive my spirit. And he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.*

In this affecting passage *Stephen, full of the Holy Ghost*, and vouchsafed *a vision of the glory of God, and of Jesus standing on the right hand of God*, prays to Christ to forgive the sin of his murderers. Words, one would think, cannot be more decisive.

Matthew ix. 2—7, *And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus, seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee. And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For, Whether is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. And he arose, and departed unto his house.*

In this passage Christ said to the sick of the palsy, *Son, thy sins are forgiven thee.* Some of the *Scribes*, who were present, accused him in their own hearts of blasphemy; and said, as *Mark* informs us, *Who can forgive sin, but God only?* In this also they spoke the truth. Christ knew their thoughts; and asked them, *Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise, and walk?* Both these acts belonging to God only, the latter is here, with supreme force, proposed as a test of the former. Christ, therefore, makes it such; and tells the *Scribes*, that he will prove to them his power to forgive sins by his power to raise up the sick of the palsy, with a command. Accordingly, as a proof in form, that he possessed this

power, he says to the sick of the palsy, *Arise, and walk.* The sick man *immediately arose, and departed to his house.*

Here the power of Christ to forgive sins was denied by the Scribes, and expressly asserted by himself. Of this assertion he undertook the proof, on the spot; and the proof, proposed, was a miracle. A miracle can be wrought by none but God; and God cannot work a miracle, to prove a falsehood. The miracle was wrought; the assertion, therefore, was true.

6thly. *The act of giving Eternal life is abundantly ascribed to Christ in the Scriptures.*

John x. 27, 28, *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish.*

Revelation xxi. 6, *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him, that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely.*

Revelation ii. 7, *To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.* See also verses 17, and 28.

Revelation iii. 5, *He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life.* See, also, verses 12 and 21.

These passages need no explanation.

7thly. *To Christ is ascribed the great and awful act of Judging the world, and of acquitting and condemning angels and men.*

John v. 22, *The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.* See also, what will preclude any further inquiry, the account of the last judgment, given by Christ himself, in the 25th chapter of *Matthew.*

All these are confessedly the acts of the infinite God alone; and involve the absolute *possession of power, and perfection without limits.* To create, preserve, and govern, the Universe; to give and restore life; to forgive sin; to bestow eternal life; to judge the world of angels and men, and acquit, or condemn, finally and for ever all Intelligent beings; is, if any thing is, *to be*, and *to act as being*, the true God; the only, infinite, and eternal JEHOVAH.

In the great act of judging the world, particularly, the absolute exercise, and the most wonderful display ever made, of Omniscience, as well as Infinite Justice, will be made. To judge righteously in this amazing case plainly requires the most exact and minute, as well as the most comprehensive and perfect knowledge of all the thoughts, words, and actions, of Intelligent beings; together with all the aggravations and palliations of guilt, and all the enhancements and diminutions of virtue, which have existed in the Universe. Consequently, whatever circumstances have attended these innumerable beings must be perfectly known, and actually present at once to the view of such a judge. Nor must he be less perfectly acquainted with the precise kinds, and distri-

butions, of punishment and reward, which the respective works, and characters, of these numberless individuals, in their endlessly various circumstances, justly require.

To these things must be added, what Christ directly challenges to himself, the power of opening and shutting heaven and hell, or Hades, at his pleasure, and of conferring the happiness of heaven, and inflicting the miseries of hell, on whom he pleases.

If, then, Christ be not God; the real God has so ordered things in his providence, that the peculiar displays of divine perfection, the greatest which will ever be made, will be made by a creature, and not by himself. The creation, preservation, and government, of the Universe; the giving of life, and the restoration of it to the dead; the forgiveness of sin; the communication of endless life; and the final judgment of Intelligent beings; are the highest, the most peculiar, and the most perfect, displays of the Godhead. Omnipotence and Infinite Wisdom are pre-eminently manifested in the formation and government of all things; Infinite Benevolence, in the forgiveness and salvation of sinners; and Omniscience and Infinite Justice, in acquitting and condemning, rewarding and punishing, the righteous and the wicked.

If, then, these, the most perfect, displays of the Godhead, do not prove Christ to be the real and supreme God; let me ask, In what manner, and by what arguments, shall we prove, that there is such a God? The existence and perfections of this glorious Being have, hitherto, been always evinced from the Creation, Preservation, and Government, of the Universe. But these, if the Scriptures are true, are the acts of Christ. If, then, they prove the existence of God at all; they certainly prove Christ to be God. If they do not prove him, whose acts they are, to be God; they do not prove God to exist at all: for they cannot prove *him* to be God, whose acts they are not. To what proofs, then, of the being of God are we to recur, unless we admit these to be the proofs? and if we admit them, how can we deny, or doubt, the Deity of Christ?

Let me further ask each member of this assembly to apply this subject to his own case; and say, whether he is not ready fearlessly to commit his all to *Him*, who has done, and will do, all these amazing things? who in the Scriptures is called God, and JEHOVAH; and to whom all the attributes of the Infinite Mind are ascribed? If he is not; let me ask him, To what being is he willing to trust this mighty deposit; himself; his soul; his all?

SERMON XXXVII.

DIVINITY OF CHRIST PROVED FROM DIVINE RELATIONS, SUSTAINED BY HIM; AND FROM DIVINE WORSHIP, AND RENDERED, TO HIM.

ROMANS viii. 3, 4.—*For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned Sin in the flesh; That the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

For God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and of a sin-offering, hath condemned sin in the flesh, (the thing impossible to the Law, because it was weak through the flesh:) That the righteousness of the Law may be fulfilled by us, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.
Dr. Macknight's Translation.

HAVING shown in the two preceding discourses, that *Christ is spoken of in the Scriptures as the true and perfect God;* because,

1st. *The Names,*

2dly. *The Attributes,* and,

3dly. *The Actions of God are ascribed to him;* I shall now proceed to consider the remaining particulars, proposed under this head: viz.

4thly. *That the Relations, which God sustains to his creatures, are, in the Scriptures, ascribed to Christ;* and,

5thly. *That Divine Worship is in the Scriptures required to be rendered, and by persons inspired was actually rendered, to Christ.*

In examining *the Relations, sustained by God to his creatures, and ascribed in the Scriptures to Christ,* so copious a field is opened for discussion, that it can only be partially surveyed at the present time. I shall, therefore, confine my attention to the following particulars.

1st. *Christ sustains to the Universe the Relation of Creator.*

In the passages, quoted in the preceding discourse, to prove, that *the act of creating* is ascribed to Christ in the Scriptures, it is asserted, that he is *the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth; of Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, and Powers; and of every individual thing, which hath been made.* In the Relation of Creator he stands, therefore, to every being, great and small, in the Heavens and in the Earth. Atoms were called into existence by his word: Angels owe to him their exalted being. This is a relation, which no being, but the infinite JEHOVAH, can sustain; and is plainly that, on which all the other relations of God to his crea-

tures depend. Accordingly, God challenges this character to himself, as *his* character alone, sustained by himself only. *I*, saith he, *am* JEHOVAH, *and none else; forming light, and creating darkness; making peace, and creating evil: I* JEHOVAH *am the author of all these things.** Whatever the Creator makes is in the most absolute sense his own; and can in no sense belong to any other, unless by his gift. Whatever connexion, therefore, exists between God, as God, and creatures, as such, arises originally, and entirely, from the act of bringing them into being. All the rights which the Infinite Mind claims, and holds, over the Universe, and all the duties of Intelligent creatures, spring, originally, from this source only. It is *His* Universe, because He made it. They are *His* property, because by Him they were created. As their Creator therefore, they look to him, and him alone, to whom they are indebted for every thing, and to whom they owe every thing, which they can do; because every thing, in which they can be concerned, depends upon their existence. But for this; however excellent, great, and desirable, he might be, and however deserving of their love and admiration; still they would not be *his*. This, God himself teaches us in direct terms. *Remember these things, O Jacob; and Israel, for thou art my servant. I have formed thee; thou art my servant. But now, saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, fear not, thou art mine.* Out of this act of giving existence arises, then, his property in all creatures; and his right to give them laws, to control their actions, to judge, reward, and punish them, and universally to dispose of them according to his pleasure: together with all their corresponding duties. To Christ, then, belong all these rights. But who can possess these rights, or sustain the Relation, out of which they arise, beside the only, living, and true God?

In sustaining this relation to the Universe, Christ possesses, also, of course, all the attributes, necessary to it, and displayed in the work of creating; particularly the power and wisdom, manifested in the production of all things. This power and wisdom are plainly infinite.

I know it is said by *Emlyn*, and other *Arians*, that we do not see the infinity of these attributes displayed in creating the Universe; and that they may, for aught that appears to us, have existed in a sufficient degree for the production of all things, and yet not have been infinite.

On this subject I observe,

1st. *That of creating power, in the abstract, or unexercised, we have no idea at all; and, therefore, cannot thus discern it to be infinite.*

2dly. *We cannot comprehend infinity in any sense.* The mind, which can comprehend infinity, must itself be infinite. When we

* Isaiah xlv. 6, 7. Lowth.

speak of infinite power, as evident in the creation of all things, *we simply declare the fact, that this power is infinite.* That infinity exists with respect to duration, expansion, or any thing else which is infinite, we may perceive distinctly; and yet are perfectly unable to comprehend eternity, or immensity.

3dly. *The power of creating, or giving existence, is evidently a subject to which limits can no more be assigned in our thoughts than to duration, or space.* Plainly, he who gave existence to one atom, can give existence to Atoms, and therefore to worlds, without number. He who gave intelligence, who formed men, and angels, and archangels, can form all kinds, and degrees, of intelligence, which can be formed; and can raise men, and angels, and other rational beings, to any height, to any perfection, of intelligence, which in the nature of things is possible. To this power, therefore, no other bound can be set, beside possibility. He who formed all things cannot create contradictions. This, however, is no circumscription of his power; for if it could be done he could do it. The only difference, which would exist, would be in the nature of the things themselves, and not in the power of the Maker.

4thly. *If Creation and Preservation be not a proof of infinite power, there is no proof, that such power exists.* Of this there needs no illustration, but one: viz. that these are the only sources, whence infinite power has been hitherto argued in the present world: for the argument *a priori* I consider as of no value.

5thly. *We plainly cannot see, that Creating power is not infinite; nor can we furnish a single argument for the support of such a conclusion.* The doctrine is, therefore, a mere gratuitous assumption; and merits as little consideration, as any other such assumption.

6thly. *Creating power is the source of all power that exists, except itself. If therefore creating power is not infinite, there is no infinite power.* Christ therefore, as the Creator of all things, possessed originally all existing power; whether we allow it to be infinite, or not.

7thly. The Scriptures have determined this point so far as the subject of this Sermon is concerned: for in Hebrews iii. 4, they say, *Every house is builded by some one: but he that built all things is God.*

It will be easily discerned, that the remarks made here, concerning the *power*, displayed in Creation, are with equal force applicable to the *Wisdom*, exhibited in that work.

2dly. *Christ sustains also the Relation of Preserver.*

By him all things consist.

Upholding all things by the word of his power.

That God is the only preserver of the Universe is unquestionably evident to the eye of Reason; and has accordingly been acknowledged by all men, who have acknowledged a God. It is, also, in the most definite manner declared in the Scriptures. In

Nehemiah ix. 6, the Levites at the head of the Congregation, assembled for a solemn, national fast, blessed God in these terms. *Thou, even thou, art Jehovah alone, thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their hosts; the earth, and all things that are therein; the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee. Thou art Jehovah, the God, who didst choose Abram, and brought him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham.* In this passage it is declared in the most explicit terms, that He, who preserves all things, is the Being worshipped by the host of heaven; *Jehovah alone; The* JEHOVAH; *The* GOD; according to *Parkhurst and Lowth*, The JEHOVAH, The true, eternal, and unchangeable GOD; the GOD who chose *Abram*, brought him forth out of *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, and gave him the name of *Abraham*. In the subsequent verses we are further informed, that he is the *God of Israel; the great, the mighty, and the terrible* GOD; *gracious and merciful;* the Author of all the wonders in *Egypt, the Red Sea, and the Wilderness*, and of the dispensation of the law at *Sinai;* the only object of prayer, supreme love, faith, and obedience. Yet *all things consist by Christ, and he upholds them all by the word of his power.* He, therefore, is this JEHOVAH; this GOD.

The relation of Universal Preserver is plainly a relation incapable of being sustained by any being but JEHOVAH. It involves a *knowledge* of all beings, and all their circumstances; a *power* present in every place, and to every being, at every moment; sufficient in degree to hold in existence, to keep together, and to continue in order and harmony, the mighty frame of the Universe; to roll the innumerable worlds, of which it is composed, unceasingly, through the expansion; and to control, with an irresistible sway, all their motions, affections, and inhabitants; and a *wisdom* sufficient to contrive the proper employments, and destinations, of this endless multitude of beings, as well as the natures and attributes necessary for them, so as to accomplish those ends, and those only, which are worthy of the incomprehensible Workman. Of this power, knowledge, and wisdom, the Scriptures, therefore, assert Christ to be possessed when they declare him to be the Preserver of all things. Our ideas of the power, exerted in the preservation, and also in the creation, of the Universe, they exceedingly enhance, by informing us, that *both these amazing works are accomplished by his word. Upholding all things by the word of his power. He spake; and it was done.* Of course, both are performed with perfect ease; and he, who does them, *fainteth not, neither is weary.*

In the character of the Preserver of the Universe, all creatures owe to Christ the continuance of their blessings, and their hopes. As we should have been nothing, had we not been created, so we should become nothing, were we not preserved. On this relation, therefore, next after that of Creator, we depend for every thing; and to him who sustains it we owe every thing. Were it possible,

that he, who sustains it, should be any other than God, we should still, originally and continually, owe all things to him, and nothing to God. To such a monstrous absurdity does the opinion, that the Creator, and Preserver, is any other than the True and Perfect God, ultimately conduct; and, if they would be consistent with themselves, does in fact conduct, those, who deny Christ to be God.

As the Preserver of the Righteous, Christ is appropriately called, in the Scriptures, by the emphatical name of *the Shepherd*. *I*, saith he, of himself, *am the good Shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. I am the good Shepherd and know my sheep;* John x. 11, 14.—*Our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the Sheep;* Hebrews xiii. 20.—*And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory, which fadeth not away;* 1 Peter v. 4.—*There shall be one fold, and one Shepherd;* John x. 16.—*Awake, O Sword, against my Shepherd, against the Man that is my fellow*, &c.; Zech. xiii. 7.—*Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock, like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young;* Isaiah xl. 10, 11.—JEHOVAH *is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness, for his name's sake;* Psalm xxiii. 1—3. In these passages we are informed, that Christ is *the good Shepherd, the great Shepherd, the chief Shepherd, and The Shepherd of God, the Man that is the fellow, or compeer, of Jehovah of Hosts.* We are further informed, that there is one *Shepherd* to the flock; that he is the final Judge of the quick and the dead; that JEHOVAH is the *Shepherd of David*, one of the Righteous, and therefore, by irresistible consequence, of all the righteous; that the Lord God will feed his flock, *like a Shepherd, will gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom.* If, therefore, Christ be not JEHOVAH; if he be not the Lord God, then there are two Shepherds, instead of one; of whom Christ is still the chief and the great Shepherd: and, although the Shepherd of *David* was JEHOVAH, yet Christ is the Shepherd of all other righteous persons. This character Christ recognizes, when he informs us, that at the Great Day he will *separate the Sheep from the goats;* and this character he will for ever sustain in the future world; for there, we are taught, he will *feed them*, and *lead them to living fountains of waters.*

3dly. *Christ sustains the Character of the Possessor of all things.*

At his entrance into this world, it is said, *He came unto his own things*, τα ἰδια; *and his own men*, or *kindred*, (οἱ ἰδιοι) *received him not;* that is, he came into the world, but mankind or the Jewish nation received him not. John i. 11. *All things*, saith Christ, *which the Father hath, are mine, or my things;* John xvi. 15.

Again, in his intercessory prayer, he says to the Father, *All things, that are mine, are thine; and the things, which are thine, are mine;* John xvii. 10. It will be needless to add any further passages to texts so perfectly explicit, and unambiguous, as these. It is proper, however, to remark, that the possession of all things is inseparably connected with the Creation and Preservation of all things. All things are necessarily the property, and possession, of Christ, because he made them, and because he upholds them in being; as saith the Psalmist, *The Earth is* JEHOVAH'S, *and the fulness thereof, the World and they that dwell therein; for he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.*

But the Possession of the Universe involves in the Possessor, to say the least, *an absolute knowledge of every thing that is thus possessed.* No mind can possess any thing, to which its comprehension does not extend. *Entitled* to it, it may be; *in the actual possession of it*, it cannot be. But no mind, except the Omniscient, can comprehend, or ever discern, more than a little part of the Universe; and therefore none but the Omniscient Mind can possess any more than this little part.

There is indeed a humbler and totally different sense, in which it may be figuratively said, and in which it is said in the Scriptures, that the *Saints shall inherit all things;* and in which *all things are said to be theirs;* viz. *that all things shall work together for good to them.* In this manner all things cannot, with propriety, be said to belong to Christ; because, being *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*, his enjoyment is, like himself, unchangeable; and cannot in any sense be the result of the changes, of which created things are the subjects. The happiness of created beings results only, and necessarily, from his government of all things for their benefit; but his happiness existed before the things themselves, and can be dependent on nothing, but his own mind.

Further, the possession of all things involves, inseparably, the control over them in such a degree, as to direct them immediately to the use, and purposes, of the possessor. That which we cannot command for our own use, we do not in the proper sense possess. But the power and the knowledge necessary to the possession of all things, are in this view plainly infinite.

4thly. *Christ sustains the relation of Supreme Ruler to the Universe.*

Revelation xix. 11, &c. *And I saw Heaven opened; and behold a white horse, and he that sat on him was called Faithful and True, and his name is called* THE WORD OF GOD. *And he hath on his vesture, and on his thigh, a name written:* KING OF KINGS *and* LORD OF LORDS. Rev. xvii. 14, *These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them; for he is* LORD OF LORDS, *and* KING OF KINGS. 1 Tim. vi. 15, *Which in his times the blessed and only potentate shall show, the* KING OF KINGS, *and* LORD OF LORDS. Acts x. 36, *Jesus Christ: this person is Lord*

of all things. Romans ix. *Christ, who is over all things, God blessed for ever, Amen.* Philippians ii. 10, 11, *That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth: And that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* In these passages Christ is directly exhibited as the Lord, or Ruler, of the Universe, in the most absolute sense; *the Lord of all things, whom things in Heaven, and things in earth, are respectively required to confess as their Lord.*

But the government of the Universe requires, if any thing requires, the attributes of an Infinite Mind: goodness to prompt, justice to direct, knowledge to discern, and power to execute, whatever is right, wise, and good to be done; and to prevent the existence of whatever is not. It demands also existence every where present, and eternally enduring, throughout the boundless and everlasting kingdom of God. Without these attributes Christ must be the Lord only in name, and rule only in pretence; and such must undoubtedly be the character, attributed to him in these, and the almost innumerable other, passages of Scripture, in which he is styled Lord, and said to hold the dominion over all things; unless he is essentially possessed of these attributes. The Scriptures are not thus deficient in their own scheme; for, when they attribute universal dominion to Christ, they teach us, that he is qualified for such dominion, by declaring, that *in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead.* We are not, therefore, left at a loss by the Scriptures themselves concerning his perfect qualifications for the exercise of this government; nor can we wonder, that he, who made, and preserves, should also govern, all things.

In this relation Christ gave the Law to the *Israelites*, and to Mankind, at mount *Sinai;* and in this character, as the rightful Lawgiver, he directed his own Spirit to inspire the Prophets and Apostles with the knowledge of his Word, as the universal Law to mankind. *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the* FATHER, *even the* SPIRIT OF TRUTH; *He will guide you into all the truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things which the Father hath are mine; therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shew it unto you;* John xv. 26. xvi. 13—15. *Of which salvation the Prophets have inquired, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify.* Accordingly the Scriptures are called *the Word of Christ; Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom; and The Law of Christ; Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the Law of Christ.* The Law, here referred to, is no other than *the second command of the moral Law, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;* or that branch of this command, which, respecting Christians peculiarly, is called *the*

New commandment; A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another; John xiii. 34. In this character, Christ, when he began to preach, expounded, altered, and annulled, the Law of *Moses in his own name, and at his own pleasure.* All the prophets, who came before him, introduced their messages to mankind under the name, and authority, by which they spoke; and prefaced them with *Thus saith the Lord; Thus saith Jehovah;* and *Thus saith Jehovah of hosts.* Christ, on the contrary, when altering and annulling these very things, uses no name but his own; and speaks directly by his own authority; introducing his own laws with *Verily, I say unto you;* plainly intended to be equivalent to *Thus saith the Lord;* because the things, which were prefaced with this latter phrase, were openly altered and revoked by him.

In this character also, he disposes of the present and future allotments of all beings; opens and shuts at his pleasure the world of death, and departed spirits; consigns whom he pleases to endless suffering; and bestows on whom he pleases immortal life. In this character, he is *the head of all principality and power;* Col. ii. 10.—*Who having gone into Heaven,* saith *St. Peter, is on the right hand of God: Angels, Authorities, and Powers, being subjected to him.* In this relation, it is obvious, that all Intelligent beings are bound to render him their supreme and ultimate homage and obedience: that his Law is the rule of all their conduct; from obeying which nothing can excuse them; the law, by which they will be tried, and approved, or condemned: that his Word is the only rule of life and salvation to mankind: that his Dominion is the supreme and universal control, to which in this and every other world Intelligent beings are rightfully required to bow; to which every one of them in this and all other worlds will ultimately bow; and by which all things are, and will for ever be, regulated at his pleasure: that he is the Judge, who will finally acquit or condemn, reward or punish, every Intelligent creature. I scarcely need to ask, Who can sustain this stupendous relation to the Universe, except JEHOVAH?

5thly. *Christ is the Last End of all things.*

Colossians i. 16, *All things were created by him, and for him:* that is, they were all created for his use; that he might destine them to such purposes, and conduct them to such an issue, as were agreeable to his pleasure. In the same manner as it is said Prov. xvi. 4, *Jehovah hath made all things for himself.*

It will, I suppose, be granted, as I do not see how it can be questioned, *that the End, for which any thing exists, under the control of divine Wisdom, is more important than the thing itself;* or, universally, *that the End is more important than the Means.* I suppose it will also be granted, that the End, for which all things exist, is the most important of all Ends. I suppose it will further be granted, that JEHOVAH, *in making all things for himself,* regarded himself, and in this design proved that he regarded himself, as

more important than all things else; and his glory, or pleasure, for which they were created, as the most important of all the Ends, discerned by his Omniscience, and perfectly worthy to be preferred to every other. But this plainly could not be, unless he, who thus proposed himself as the end of all things, was in the view of his Omniscience a more excellent, great, and glorious Being, than any other. If there were any other being superior to himself, such being ought plainly to be preferred to him: otherwise, that which was of inferior importance, and worth, would be preferred to that which was superior: a preference obviously unfounded, and unjust. JEHOVAH, therefore, in making all things for himself, has testified in the most solemn and forcible manner possible, that himself is more important, great, and excellent, than all other things whatever.

But *all things* are declared in the passage quoted from Colossians, *to have been created by Christ for himself.* Christ, therefore, in this act of making himself the End of the Creation of all things, has declared, that Himself is, in his own view, the most important, great, and excellent, of all things. This declaration is either true, or false. If false; it proceeded from ignorance, or from sin. It could not be from sin; for *Christ knew no sin; and is declared to be without spot, or blemish; the Holy One, and the Just; even the Holy One of God.* It could not be from ignorance; because no Intelligent creature, who knew JEHOVAH at all, could possibly suppose himself to be more important, great, and excellent than JEHOVAH; and because Christ will not be supposed, even by the *Unitarians*, to be capable of such ignorance. It is therefore true. But, if it be true, it is by inevitable consequence also true, either that Christ is greater and more important than JEHOVAH, or that he *is* JEHOVAH *himself.*

Further, as Christ is the End of all things, if he be not JEHOVAH, there is nothing, of which JEHOVAH is the End. As *all things were made for Christ;* if Christ be not JEHOVAH, there is nothing, which is made for JEHOVAH. The united tendency and result of all that has been, is, or will be, in the Universe, is the accomplishment of the pleasure and glory of Christ; and if Christ be not JEHOVAH, JEHOVAH will exist without any glory displayed; without any interest, or concern, in the Universe.

It ought also to be added, that He, who is the End of all things, for whose glory and pleasure they are to operate, must possess *Power* sufficient to direct them to his glory; and *Intelligence*, to discern, that this purpose is accomplished by them all. When we consider the greatness and multitude of the things themselves, and their everlasting continuance and operation, it will, I think, be impossible not to conclude, that this *power and intelligence* must be in the strictest sense *unlimited.*

It is with reference to this very subject, as I apprehend, that our Saviour, in his intercessory prayer, utters to the FATHER these re-

markable words:* *All things, which are mine, are thine; and all things, which are thine, are mine: and I am glorified in them;* John xvii. 10. Here, in two forms of expression, he declares to the FATHER the co-extension of the property, which the FATHER and the SON have in the Universe, and their mutual possession of all things; and then adds, that *he is glorified in*, or by means of, *them all.* This may be properly styled Christ's own comment on the declaration of St. Paul, that *all things were made for him;* that is, for his use; his glory: for here Christ declares his glory to be actually accomplished by them all.

This doctrine is plainly, and utterly inconsistent with the *Arian* notion of Christ's being *a subordinate God;* to whom divine power is supposed to have been delegated; and who, in this character of a delegate, is supposed to have created the Universe, and to be worshipped. On this notion I propose to make some observations hereafter. At present I shall only remark, that He, who is the first Cause, or Creator, and the last End, of all things, is all that is, or can be, meant by the SUPREME GOD. All things being made for *his* use, and being the means of *his* glory; there is nothing left to a Being, higher and greater than himself; nor does it appear, that such a Being can have any material concern with the Universe, in any manner whatever.

I shall now consider the 5th, and last, particular, mentioned under this head: viz. *That Divine Worship is in the Scriptures required, and by persons inspired was actually rendered, to Christ.*

Divine worship is required to be rendered to Christ; John v. 22, 23, *For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father that sent him.* In this passage of Scripture we are informed, that the infinite prerogative of judging the universe is committed by the Father to the Son, for this, as at least one, if not the only, great end, *that all* (that is, I apprehend, all Intelligent creatures; the word *men* not being in the original) *should honour the Son even as* (that is, just in the same manner, as, and in the same degree, as) *they honour the Father.* The Final Judgment, being an act which eminently displays the infinite perfections, is committed to the Son, that he may be perceived with indubitable evidence to possess these perfections, and may therefore receive that peculiar honour, which is due to Him only, by whom they are possessed. *The honour, which is due in a peculiar sense to God, consists supremely in religious worship; in making him the object of our supreme affection; and rendering to him our supreme obedience.* All this is here required to Christ in the same manner, in which it is required to the FATHER.

Whether it be supposed, that this passage be intended to include

* See the original Greek.

angels, or not; they are expressly required to worship him in Psalm xcvii. 7: *confounded be all they that serve graven images. Worship him, all ye Gods.* St. Paul quotes a part of this verse in the following manner: *And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, Let all the Angels of God worship him.* It is therefore certain, that all the angels of God are required to worship Christ.

The only possible debate, which can arise here, is concerning the kind of worship, which is to be rendered. On this I observe, that the Greek word is προσκυνησατωδαν; and that this word is used twenty-four times in the New Testament, to denote the worship of the true God; that it is used many times more to denote the religious worship of false gods; and that it is, so far as I have observed, the only word, used to denote what is intended by *worship, when considered as an act immediately performed.* The words Θεραπευω, Λατρευω, and Σεβομαι, rendered also to worship, appear rather to express either habitual reverence, or service, or a general course of worship, considered as a character, or course of life. Προσκυνεω, so far as I have been able to observe, is the only term, used to denote religious worship by *St. John;* and is certainly the appropriate word for this idea, if there is any such appropriate word in the New Testament. It is, particularly, the word, used by Christ in his answer to Satan; *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God;* and in his discourse with the woman of *Samaria* concerning the place where, the manner in which, and the persons by whom, God is acceptably worshipped.

Secondly. That religious worship is here intended is certain: because *the Object of the worship, commanded, is directly opposed in the command itself, to idols; and the worship, required, to that which is forbidden. Confounded be all they that serve,* that is religiously worship, *graven images; that boast themselves of idols.* As if God had said, Worship no more graven images, nor idols of any kind; for all their worshippers shall be confounded: Worship *him;* the Messiah; the Son of God; and not only you, the sottish men who are guilty of this idolatry; but all ye Angels, also, to whom this worship is often sottishly rendered.

In the same manner, is this worship commanded to both men and angels. Phil. ii. 9—11, *Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name; That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* In this passage, all things celestial, terrestrial, and subterranean, (as it is in the original) are required to bow the knee to Christ, and to confess him to be Lord. To bow the knee is well known appropriate phraseology to denote religious worship. *I have left me,* says God to *Elijah. seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath*

not kissed him. 1 Kings xix. 18.* St. Paul also says, *I bow my knees to the Father of all mercies.* But to place it beyond all doubt, we need only refer to Isaiah xlv. 22, 23, whence this passage is quoted. *Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. By myself have I sworn, and the truth has gone out of my mouth; the word, and it shall not be revoked. Surely to me shall every knee bow, shall every tongue swear: saying, Only to* JEHOVAH *belongeth Salvation and Power.*† To ascribe to JEHOVAH salvation and power: (the thing, which, the Apostle informs us, is the same with confessing that Christ is Lord) and to bow the knee when making this ascription, is undoubtedly religious worship, if any thing is. Accordingly, this ascription is often made by the saints in the Scriptures, and the saints and angels in heaven.

In accordance with these requisitions we find Christ actually worshipped in great numbers of instances. I shall omit here the numerous instances, in which we are directly told, that persons worshipped Christ, while here in the world; merely because they would give birth to a critical controversy, too minute, and too extended, for the present occasion. The instances, about which such a controversy cannot, at least decently, arise, are sufficiently numerous for my design.

1st. In Genesis xviii. we are told, that JEHOVAH *appeared unto Abraham in the plains of Mamre, as he sat in the door of his tent.* The manner of his appearance was the following: *As he lifted up his eyes, and looked; Lo, three men stood by him; and he ran to meet them, and bowed himself toward the ground.* To one of them he said, *My Lord, if I have now found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant,* &c. The person here spoken to is called by *Abraham,* אדני. This person in the 13th verse is called JEHOVAH; and in the 14th, says, *Is any thing too hard for* JEHOVAH? and informs *Abraham* of the destruction of the cities of the plain, which he had determined to bring upon them for their sins. To this person *Abraham prays,* repeatedly, for the preservation of these cities. *Lot* also, to whom he appeared in the following chapter, *prayed* to him for his own preservation, and that of the city *Zoar,* and was accepted. These persons are in the first place called *three men.* One of them, whom *Abraham* calls ADONAI, or LORD, is afterwards called by himself, by *Abraham,* and by *Moses,* JEHOVAH; and was worshipped by both *Abraham* and *Lot.* *The other two* are afterwards repeatedly called Angels. Now it will not be pretended, that God, the Father, appeared as a man; or that he ate of the provision, furnished by *Abraham:* for *no one hath seen God,* the Father, *at any time.* Yet this person is here styled JEHOVAH, and was worshipped; and this person was Christ.

* See Hosea xiii. 2, and Psalm ii. 2. † Lowth.

2dly. In Judges xiii. The ANGEL-JEHOVAH appeared to *Manoah* and his wife. When he departed, it is said, that *Manoah knew, that he was the* ANGEL-JEHOVAH: and it is added, *Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen* GOD. *But his wife said unto him, If* JEHOVAH *were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt-offering, and a meat-offering, at our hands.* In verse 16, the Angel had said *Manoah, If thou wilt offer a burnt-offering, thou must offer it unto* JEHOVAH; *for*, it is subjoined, *Manoah knew not, that he was the* ANGEL-JEHOVAH. But after he had ascended in the flame of the *altar, then*, it is declared, *Manoah knew that he was the* ANGEL-JEHOVAH. The burnt-offering and the meat-offering *Manoah* and his wife then perceived themselves to have offered unwittingly to Him, who had manifested to them his acceptance of both at their hands.

Here the worship was not only presented to Christ; but, what is of much more importance to my purpose, was accepted by him.

3dly. *David worships Christ, in* Psalm xlv. and lxxii. and cii. *in ascribing to him the praise, which is due to God only.* In the two first he declares, *that the people shall praise him, and fear him, and fall down before him, and serve him for ever and ever.* In the last he makes to him a long-continued prayer.

4thly. In Isaiah vi. the Seraphim worshipped him, saying, *Holy, Holy, Holy, is* JEHOVAH OF HOSTS.

5thly. Stephen, in Acts vii. 59, 60, *prayed to Christ. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God*, or as in the original, *they stoned Stephen invoking, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge; and having said this, he fell asleep.*

On this prayer of *St. Stephen* I make the following remarks:

First. *Stephen* at this time was full of the Holy Ghost, (verse 55) and therefore perfectly secured from error.

Secondly. He was singularly favoured of God on account of the greatness of his faith and obedience; and, as a peculiar testimony of the divine favour, he was permitted to *see the Heavens opened*, and *to behold the glory of God*, and *Jesus standing on the right hand of God.*

Thirdly. In the full assurance, produced by this vision, and the faith, with which he beheld it, he presented his final petitions to Christ.

Fourthly. The first of these petitions respected the highest personal object, which can be prayed for: viz. *the eternal salvation of his soul;* and attributed to *Him*, to whom it was made, that infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, which alone can bestow salvation.

Fifthly. The second petition was of the same nature; being a prayer, *that his enemies might not be finally condemned for the sin of murdering him;* and of course attributed to the Person, to whom it was addressed, the power of forgiving, or condemning, these

murderers. No higher act of worship was ever rendered than this; nor was any act of worship ever performed on a more solemn occasion; nor by a person better qualified to worship aright; nor with a more illustrious testimony of acceptance. Yet this act of worship was performed to Christ.

Sixthly. This was the very worship, and these were the very prayers, offered to God, a little before, by Christ at his crucifixion. *Stephen*, therefore, worshipped Christ just as Christ worshipped the Father.

6thly. *St. Paul often prayed to Christ directly.** Particularly, 1 Thess. iii. 11, 12, *Now God* himself, *even our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you. And the Lord make you to increase, and abound, in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you.* Here a prayer is offered up by *St. Paul*, that he may be guided to the *Thessalonians;* and that they may be made to increase and abound in holiness, and established unto the end. This prayer is offered up to God the Father, and to our Lord Jesus Christ, in the same manner, and the same terms: both being unitedly addressed in the same petition, without any note of distinction. The second of these petitions is also offered up to Christ alone. The same petition, in substance, is presented to the Father and Son, united in the same manner: 2 Thess. ii. 16, 17. In the third chapter, verse 5, *Paul* prays, *Now may the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God, and to the patience of Christ:* and verse 16, *Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace by all means. The Lord be with you all.* Again, 2 Cor. xii. 8, *Concerning this*, that is, the messenger of Satan to buffet him, *St. Paul* says, *Thrice I besought the Lord, that it might depart from me. But he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in mine infirmities; that the power of Christ may rest upon me.* In this passage *St. Paul* informs us, that he thrice prayed to Christ, respecting the particular subject mentioned.

7thly. *St. Paul*, in all his Epistles, except that to the Hebrews; and *St. John* in his second Epistle, pray to Christ, in that noted request, in which also, *Silas*, *Timothy*, and *Sosthenes* united, that *grace, mercy, and peace might be multiplied*, or communicated, to those to whom they wrote, *from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.* This is an express prayer to the Father and the Son, united, to grant grace, mercy, and peace to men. These are the highest of all blessings, and such as none, but JEHOVAH, can grant. Yet Christ can grant them, because the Spirit of Inspiration directed, that He should be prayed to for them.

8thly. *The Baptismal service, directed by Christ himself, is an act of religious worship to Christ. Baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* Whether this be inter-

* See Bishop Burnet on the Articles, p. 48.

preted to mean, *Baptizing them* INTO *the name, or* IN *the name*, it makes no difference. If Christians are baptized *into* the name, they are baptized into the name of God only: for they are the children of God, only, by adoption; that adoption, by which they take his name upon them; and Christ is here declared to be the God, whose name they assume. If they are baptized *in* the name; they are baptized in the name, or authority, of God only: but Christ is this God.

9thly. *The blessing, pronounced on Christian assemblies, is an act of religious worship, rendered to Christ. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.* Amen. *Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ;* Eph. vi. 23. Or as it was more commonly, *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.* Amen. The first of these is equivalent to the blessing, anciently pronounced by the High Priest on the children of *Israel.* JEHOVAH *bless thee, and keep thee:* JEHOVAH *make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious to thee:* JEHOVAH *lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace.* It is the appropriate office of the Father to bless, and preserve; of the Son to give grace, and illumination; and of the Spirit to communicate peace.

Finally; so universal was the custom of praying to Christ, *that Christians were originally* entitled, as their distinguishing appellation, "*Those who called on the name of Christ.*" Thus *Ananias* says to Christ, Acts ix. 14, *Here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all those that call on thy name.* The people of *Damascus*, also, when they heard *Paul* preach, *were amazed, and said, Is not this he, who destroyed them that called on this name in Jerusalem?* 1 Cor. i. 1, *Paul, called to be an Apostle of Jesus Christ, and Sosthenes the brother, unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.*—2 Tim. ii. 22, *Follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord, out of a pure heart.*—Romans x. 12, *The same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.* That Christ is here meant is evident from the preceding verse.

In all these instances, and in this universal manner, was Christ worshipped. In the greater part of the instances, the persons, who rendered the worship, were inspired; and, in the remaining instances, were plainly under divine direction; because the worship was approved, and accepted.

But religious worship is lawfully rendered to God only. This we know from the mouth of Christ himself quoting Deuteronomy x. 20, in Matthew x. 12, *It is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* The Angel also forbade *John* to worship him, saying, *See thou do it not; worship God. Isaiah* also commands, *Sanctify the Lord of Hosts himself; and let*

him be your fear and your dread. God also in Exodus xxxiv. 14, says to the *Israelites*, *Thou shalt worship no other God: for* JEHOVAH, *whose name is Jealous, is a Jealous God.*

Yet Christ is here directed to be worshipped, and is actually worshipped, by persons inspired. If, then, Christ be not God, God has commanded another to be worshipped; and persons, under the immediate direction of his Spirit, have worshipped another.

The whole Church, the Bride, is commanded, in Psalm xlv. by that God, who said unto him, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever*, thus: *Hearken, O Daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear: so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him.* The Church has in all ages obeyed this command, and worshipped him. Prophets have worshipped him: Apostles have worshipped him. Men, full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost, have besought his guidance, aid, grace, and blessing, while they lived; and, when they died, have besought him to receive their Spirits into his own eternal Kingdom. If Christ is God; if he is JEHOVAH; they have done their duty. If he is not God; if he is not JEHOVAH; they have violated through life, and in death, the first of JEHOVAH'S commands in the Decalogue: *Thou shalt have no other God before me.*

SERMON XXXVIII.

DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

PROOFS.

THIS THE ONLY GROUND OF CONSISTENCY IN THE SCHEME OF REDEMPTION.

THE JEWS OTHERWISE NOT CHARGEABLE WITH GUILT IN CRUCIFYING CHRIST.

THE APOSTLES OTHERWISE CHARGEABLE WITH LEADING MANKIND INTO IDOLATRY.

ROMANS viii. 3, 4.—*For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned Sin in the flesh; That the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

For God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and of a sin-offering, hath condemned sin in the flesh, (the thing impossible to the Law, because it was weak through the flesh:) That the righteousness of the Law may be fulfilled by us, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

Dr. Macknight's Translation.

ACCORDING to the plan, originally proposed from these words, I have, in the three preceding discourses, considered, at length, *the proofs of the Deity of Christ, arranged under the first general head:* viz. *That Christ is spoken of in the Scriptures as the true and perfect* GOD.

I shall now proceed to consider the three following heads of discourse, originally proposed; viz.

II. *That the Deity of Christ is the only ground of Consistency in the scheme of Redemption:*

III. *That the Jews, according to the opposite doctrine, are unjustly charged with Guilt in putting Christ to death:*

IV. *That the Prophets and Apostles, according to the same doctrine, cannot be vindicated from the sin of leading mankind into Idolatry.*

The last argument, then proposed, I shall omit to examine, until I have considered the divinity of the Holy Spirit; and shall now proceed to the consideration of the

II. Viz. *That the Deity of Christ is the only ground of Consistency in the scheme of Redemption.*

The truth of this assertion I shall attempt to evince by showing.

that the Deity of Christ is the only ground of Consistency in the things, spoken of him, as

The light of the World;

The Saviour of the World; and,

The Propitiation for Sin.

1st. *As the Light of the World.*

Christ is exhibited in the Scriptures *as the light of the World, in two respects:*

First. *As Revealing the will of* GOD *to mankind;* and,

Secondly, *As Communicating spiritual, or divine, Light to the soul.*

In both respects, the things, said of Christ in the Scriptures, as the Light of the World, are consistent, only on the supposition, that Christ is the true GOD. That the Scriptures are the Word of JEHOVAH will not be questioned by any man, who believes in a Revelation; since they are called by this title, and by others equivalent to it, in hundreds of instances, from Genesis to the Revelation of *St. John.* But the Scriptures are expressly declared to be the Word of Christ: *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching, and admonishing, one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs.* In this passage, *the Old Testament* is in so many terms declared to be the Word of Christ. *The Gospel,* every man knows, is appropriately entitled *the Gospel of Christ.*

St. Mark prefaces his account of the Gospel with these words: *The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of* GOD.

St. Paul informs us, that he received the Gospel immediately by revelation from Christ; and accordingly he every where styles it the Gospel of Christ. The greatness of the authority, which it derived from this source, he teaches us in the strongest manner, when he says, *Though we, or an angel from heaven, or any one whatever, preach another Gospel, let him be accursed.* Galatians i. 8, 9. This Gospel, he also says, is *Christ, the power, and wisdom of* GOD *unto salvation.*

St. Peter teaches the same truth, in a manner equally forcible, when he says, *Of which salvation the Prophets have enquired, searching what, and what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify.* Here the Spirit which inspired the Prophets, is styled *the Spirit of Christ;* and this Spirit, the same Apostle says, is *the Holy Ghost. For Prophecy,* saith he, *came not in old time, by the will of man; but holy men of* GOD *spake, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.* The *Old Testament,* therefore, was revealed to the Prophets by the spirit of Christ.

Concerning the *New,* Christ himself teaches us the same doctrine, in the same decisive manner. *Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come; He will guide you into all the truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall*

shew it unto you. He shall teach you all things, and shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

All things, therefore, which Christ had said to the Apostles, the Spirit of Truth brought to their remembrance. He taught them all things, and guided them into all the Truth. Yet he spoke not of himself, but that which he heard, which he received from Christ, and that only, he declared unto them. The Gospel, therefore, is originally, and only, derived from Christ. Yet it is repeatedly styled by St. Paul, *the Gospel of* GOD.

This Character of the Revealer of the will of God, St. John declares repeatedly in the introduction of his Gospel. After having declared, that *the Word was in the beginning*, or eternal; *was* GOD; *and was co-eternal with* GOD; *and that all things were made by him;* he goes on to say, *In him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.* He then informs us, that *John the Baptist came to bear witness of the Light; that he was not that Light; but was sent to bear witness of that Light.* Then he adds, *That was the true Light which lighteth every man, that cometh into the world.* To all this he adds further the testimony of *John the Baptist;* the very Witness which he bore concerning Christ as the Light. *No one*, said this harbinger of the Redeemer, who was sent for the very purpose of declaring his true character, *No one hath seen* GOD *at any time; the only begotten Son of* GOD, *who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared him.* To declare the character, and designs, of GOD, is plainly impossible, unless for him, who knows these things intuitively; or for him, to whom GOD is pleased to make them known. But no other person, beside the Son, and the Spirit, knows the things of GOD intuitively. This we know certainly, without inspiration; but the Scriptures have determined the point if it were otherwise uncertain. *No one*, saith our Saviour, *knoweth the Father, but the Son; and he, to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. The things of* GOD, saith *St. Paul, knoweth no one, but the Spirit of* GOD: *and the Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of* GOD. From all these passages it is, I apprehend, certain, that Christ is the sole author of Revelation; and that the Spirit has not, as the Spirit of Inspiration, spoken of himself; but has received from Christ his mind or pleasure, and declared it to the men, whom he inspired. Accordingly, *St. Paul* says, speaking of his own Inspiration, and that of the other Apostles, *We have the mind of Christ.* It is, therefore, true to this day, that *no one knoweth the Father, but the Son, and those to whom the Son hath revealed him.* This knowledge thus revealed, was not revealed to Christ, but was Possessed by him, because he dwells in the bosom of the Father, and has dwelt there from Eternity; *being daily his delight, and rejoicing alway before him.*

Should it be objected, that *mankind know something of* GOD *by their Reason, independently of Revelation, and therefore possess a*

knowledge of GOD, *which is not derived from Christ:* I answer, that with some qualifications I admit the premises, but deny the consequence. The very Reason of Man was formed by Christ, as was man himself; as were, also, all those materials, from which Reason derives whatever knowledge of this nature it possesses. It has, I trust, been proved beyond reasonable debate, that Christ created, preserves, and governs all things; and therefore, is the Author of those works of Creation and Providence, whence Reason obtains all its knowledge of this subject. Of course, in this sense, also, Christ is *the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.* Thus all the knowledge, which exists, of GOD, is derived from Christ; and, since he is *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and dwells in the bosom of the Father;* this knowledge was his originally, intuitively, and eternally. I need not say, that these things cannot be true of any mind, but the Omniscient.

Secondly, *Christ is the Author of Spiritual light to mankind.*

The communication of Spiritual light is spoken of in the Scriptures as a work peculiar to GOD. 2 Cor. iv. 6, *For* GOD, *who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of* GOD *in the face, or person, of Jesus Christ.* John vi. 45, *And they shall all be taught of* GOD: and thus in many other places. But this office is also ascribed to Christ. Simeon says, Luke ii. 30, *For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people: A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. In him,* says St. John, *was life, and the life was the light of men. I,* said our Saviour, John viii. 12, *am the light of the World; he that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.* Isaiah xlix. 6, quoted Acts xiii. 47, *I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the ends of the earth.* In all these passages it is manifest, that spiritual or divine light is the light spoken of; and that it resides in Christ, as its Source; and is by him communicated to mankind. All this, also, is completely expressed by the Prophet *Malachi* in a word; when he calls Christ *the Sun of Righteousness:* the Orb, in which righteousness is originally inherent; in which it dwells; and from which it emanates to mankind. In the same manner is it said by *David, the Lord* GOD *is a Sun.*

2dly. *The things, spoken of Christ as the Saviour of the World, are consistent, only on the supposition, that he is the true* GOD.

Psalm lx. 16, *I* JEHOVAH *am thy Saviour.*

Hosea xiii. 4, *I am* JEHOVAH *thy* GOD; *thou shalt know no* GOD *but me; for there is no Saviour beside me.*

Isaiah xliii. 11, *I, even I am* JEHOVAH; *and beside me there is no Saviour:* and thus in various other places in the Old Testament.

The same thing is often declared in the New Testament. 1 Tim. i. 1, *The commandment of* GOD *our Saviour;* and Titus ii. 10, *Adorn the Doctrine of* GOD *our Saviour.*

Yet in the same absolute sense Christ is declared to be the Saviour of Mankind. *Who is this*, saith the Prophet *Isaiah, that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah; this, that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I*, saith Christ, *that speak in righteousness; mighty to save.* John iv. 42, *This is the Christ, the Saviour of the world.* Acts iv. 12, *St. Peter*, speaking of Christ, saith, *neither is there salvation in*, or, by means of, *any other; for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.* And thus in very many other places. The importance of the work of saving mankind, and the glory derived from it to the divine character, are strongly exhibited by God in Isaiah lxv. 17, 18, *For behold I create new heavens, and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad, and rejoice for ever, in that which I create: for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.* In this passage it is evident, that the New Creation is, in the view of God, so much more glorious than the original one, that, compared with it, the original creation shall not be remembered. But the new creation is no other than *creating Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy;* that is, renovating the souls of mankind, and thus making them holy, lovely, a rejoicing, or foundation of joy, in the sight of God. This work, then, is, in the sight of God, a far more glorious work, than the formation of the heavens and the earth. Such, also, it is in the eye of reason. One mind is of more importance, than any number of worlds, inanimate, and unconscious. The renovation of one mind to righteousness, and its reinstatement in the divine favour, is the production of eternal, and by us incomprehensible, worth, and enjoyment, in that mind. This work, repeated in a *multitude* of minds *which no man can number*, is the work, which is styled the New Creation. How immensely more glorious a work than the production of ever so many masses of lifeless matter!

When we consider the nature of this work, and the things involved in it, we cannot hesitate to admit the peculiar importance attached to it in the Scriptures. In this work are involved

The creation of a new heart in man;

The communication of divine knowledge;

The adoption of man into the divine family;

A perpetual presence with the souls of all, who are created anew,

A continual communication of strength, patience, fortitude, peace, consolation, and hope;

The preservation of the soul from the fatal influence of temptations, lust, and all other spiritual enemies;

The final justification of the soul at the Judgment, and its establishment in the possession of immortal life;

Together with, what will be the subject of the next head of discourse, the accomplishment of such a Propitiation, as may be the proper source of all these wonderful consequences.

He, who admits these things to be included in the work of saving Man, must admit also that there can be no Saviour beside JEHOVAH.

Should it be said, that all these things, except the last, are the work of the Holy Spirit; and that therefore they are here erroneously attributed to Christ; I answer, That they are indeed the work of the Holy Spirit; but, notwithstanding this, they are truly attributed to Christ; not only as He laid the foundation for them all; but as the Spirit acts not of himself, and only executes the pleasure of Christ under *his* commission.

This work, then, of saving Man is in the Scriptures attributed to Christ, in a manner so peculiar, that from it he derives his own appropriate name, JESUS CHRIST, THE ANOINTED SAVIOUR; and is considered by JEHOVAH as being so much greater, and more glorious, than the work of creating the heavens and the earth, that, in comparison with it, that work *shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.*

3dly. *As the Propitiation for sin, the Deity of Christ is the only ground of consistency in the Scriptural exhibitions.*

As I expect hereafter to discuss *Christ's atonement for sin*, as one of the great parts of the Christian system; I shall, here, omit every thing concerning this subject, which is not necessary to the doctrine just now declared.

That Christ is in some sense *a Propitiation for the sins of the World* cannot be denied, unless by a direct denial of the express words, as well as the unquestionable doctrines, of the Gospel. 1 John ii. 2, *And he is the propitiation for our sins;* and *not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.* 1 John iv. 10, *He loved us, and sent his Son to be the Propitiation for our sins.* See also Romans iii. 25, Isaiah liii. 10, &c. The text, also, is a direct declaration of this doctrine. GOD *sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and of a sin-offering, or an offering for sin*, &c.

By Christ's being the Propitiation for sin it is, here, necessary to mean only, *that something, which, being done for the Sinner, the Sinner may be forgiven, and restored; but which, not being done, he must be punished according to the sentence of the Law, by which he is condemned.* That so much, as is here specified, is included in Christ's being the propitiation for the sins of mankind, is unquestionably evident,

First, *From the name, by which it is called in the Scriptures, in many instances;* viz. απολυτρωσις; translated *redemption.* When a person was taken captive in war, and condemned to perpetual slavery, or to death, a sum of money was not unfrequently paid, and accepted, for his ransom from these evils; this sum was called λυτρον; and the redemption of the captive from death, or slavery, was called απολυτρωσις. The redemption of mankind from the slavery of Sin, and the everlasting death, to which the Sinner was exposed by it, is called by the same name. The λυτρον, or *price of redemption*, was paid, not by the captive, but by another per-

son. The price of Man's Redemption, in like manner, was not paid by himself, but by Christ: that is, Christ accomplished something, without which man would not have been redeemed from the bondage of death and sin.

Secondly, *This truth is evident from Isaiah* liii. 10, *Yet it pleased* JEHOVAH *to crush him with affliction. If his soul shall make a propitiatory sacrifice; he shall see a seed, which shall prolong their days; and the gracious purpose of* JEHOVAH *shall prosper in his hands. Of the travail of his soul he shall see (the fruit) and be satisfied: by the knowledge of him shall my righteous servant justify many; for the punishment of their iniquities he shall bear. Therefore I will distribute to him the many for his portion; and the mighty people shall he share for his spoil: because he poured out his soul unto death; was numbered with the transgressors: and he bare the sin of many; and made intercession for the transgressors.**

In this passage it is clear, that, in the Covenant of Redemption here recited, JEHOVAH promised to Christ *the seed, which should prolong their days*, or be eternally blessed; a promise here repeated in many forms; on the condition, that *he made his soul a propitiatory sacrifice for sin.* It is therefore certain, that if he had not made this sacrifice, he would not have received this reward: or, in other words, mankind would not have been saved.

Thirdly, *The same truth is evident from Romans* iii. 25, 26: *Christ Jesus, whom* GOD *hath set forth to be a propitiation for sin, to declare his righteousness in the remission of sins, that are past; that he might be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.*

From this passage it is evident, that, if God *had not set forth Christ as a propitiation, his righteousness in the remission of sins, that are past, would not have been declared; and that he would not have been just, in the act of justifying believers:* in other words, If Christ had not become a Propitiation, the sins of mankind could not have been remitted, nor themselves justified.

In a former discourse it has, I trust, been proved, that, in the literal sense, *by works of law no flesh can be justified before* GOD; and that the future obedience, and the repentance, of the sinner, are alike, and wholly unavailing to this end. Independently of Christ's redemption, therefore, or independently of his being *the propitiation for the sins of men*, every sinner is condemned, lost, and without hope. The Scriptures in multiplied instances teach us, that Christ became a propitiation for sin, *especially by his death.* Isaiah liii. 5, *He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him.* Romans v. 6, *In due time Christ died for the ungodly.* 1 Cor. xv. 3, *Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures.* 2 Cor. v. 14, *One died for all.* 1 Thess. v. 10, *Who died for us, that we*

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should live with him. Col. i. 20, *Having made peace through the blood of his cross.* 1 John i. 7, *The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin.* 1 Peter i. 18, 19, *Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, but with the precious blood of Christ.* Rev. v. 9, *Thou hast redeemed us to* GOD *by thy blood.* More proofs of this point cannot be necessary. Let me now ask, If Christ be not in the strictest sense God, how is it possible that he should become, in this, or any other, manner, *a Propitiation for the sins of mankind?* If Christ be merely a man, or in any other sense a mere creature; how is it possible, that he should be able to perform any act, which would not be absolutely necessary for his own justification before GOD? The law, by which every creature is governed, requires him *to love* GOD *with all the heart, soul, strength, and understanding;* or in other words, to consecrate all his powers supremely, and absolutely, so long as he exists, to the service of GOD. More than this he cannot do; and, if all this be not done, he is a sinner; and cannot be justified. How then can it be possible for him to perform any thing, which can be accepted on the behalf of another? It is impossible, that any service should be accepted for another, which is entirely due for one's self. It is impossible, that the debt due from another, should be cancelled by my Payment of Money, due for a debt of my own. When I have paid my own debts, if I can offer more money, I may then satisfy the Creditor for the debt of another. The obedience, which a law requires of me, as *my obedience*, will satisfy the demands of the law on me; and prove the means of my justification; but cannot be transferred from me to *another subject of the same law*, so as to answer the demands of the law on *him.* The Law demands all his obedience of him, and all mine of me: but, mine only being rendered; the demands of the Law are not, and cannot be, satisfied.

Supererogatory service, or service not required by Law, is absolutely necessary to the very existence of all vicarious interference. But no creature can possibly perform supererogatory service; because all that he can do is required of him by the Law. Thus *exceeding broad*, in the Scriptural language, *is the commandment;* and thus it is impossible, that any creature should become, in any sense, a propitiation for the sins of mankind.

To avoid this immoveable difficulty, *Dr. Priestly*, and other Socinians, have denied, wholly, the doctrine of Christ's Atonement; and in this denial have, at least in my view, acted in the only manner, consistent with the main part of their scheme; viz. *That Christ is a mere man.* But in this denial they have at the same time, contradicted the main doctrine in the Christian system, after that of *the existence of* GOD. According to the scheme of these men, *Christ came into the world, or was born, merely to be a Prophet, and Example, of righteousness;* or *a teacher of the will of* GOD *to mankind;* and *died, only to bear witness to the truth of his precepts.* In the same manner *Moses*, and all the succeeding Prophets, came

into the World to be teachers, and examples, of truth and righteousness; and, in the same manner, *Peter* and *Paul*, both the *Jameses*, and almost all the other apostles, together with *Stephen*, and a host of Martyrs who followed him, bore witness to the truth of the precepts which they taught, by voluntarily yielding themselves to death. All these persons taught, the truth of GOD, and practised righteousness; and a multitude of them sealed their testimony with their blood. *The only difference, according to the Socinian scheme, between Christ and them is, that he was wiser and better than they.* *Paul*, however, taught more of the Gospel than Christ himself; and both *Paul* and *Peter* sealed the truth of their testimony on the cross. Of what consequence, then, was the death of Christ to mankind, any more than that of *Zechariah*, *Jeremiah*, *James*, *Peter*, or *Paul?* Each of these men died as a witness to the truth. Christ, according to *Dr. Priestly*, appeared in no other character in his death. All these men, also, taught the truth: according to Dr. Priestly Christ did no more. Each of these men was an eminent example of righteousness: according to *Dr. Priestly* Christ was only a brighter example. With what meaning then can it be said, that GOD *hath set forth Christ as a propitiation for the remission of sins;* that Christ is said to be *the propitiation for the sins of the World; that his soul is said to make a propitiatory sacrifice for sin; that he bare the sin of many;* that *we are justified, and redeemed, by his blood; that by himself he purged our sins;* that *he made peace through the blood of the Cross;* that *he reconciled both Jews and Gentiles unto* GOD *in one body by the Cross;* that *by his stripes we are healed;* that *the chastisement of our peace was laid upon him;* and that *we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins;* together with many other things of the same import; so many, as to constitute no small part of the Scriptures? And why did Christ say *he came to give his life a ransom for many?* and why did Paul say, *Christ gave himself a ransom for all.* Could these things be said of *Moses*, or *Jeremiah*, or *Peter*, or *James*, or *Paul?* Are we justified by the grace of GOD through the redemption which is in *Moses?* Did *Paul* make peace by the blood of his cross? Was *Peter* a propitiation; an ιγασμος; the means of appeasing the anger of GOD, of reconciling him to us, and rendering him propitiatory to sinners?

Farther; in what sense was the death of Christ *necessary, as a testimony to the truth of his precepts?* Were not *his miracles, and the unspotted excellency of his life, ample proofs of the sincerity of his declarations, and the reality of his mission from* GOD? Are they not now appealed to by *Dr. Priestly*, and most if not all other divines, as the chief proofs? Is not his death rarely appealed to for this purpose? And is it not manifest from this fact, that it is a testimony, plainly inferior to his life, and miracles?

If, then, this was *the end*, and *amount*, of Christ's death; is it not evident, on the one hand, that the end was in a great measure

useless, and very imperfectly accomplished: and, on the other, that the amount of Christ's death was no more than the amount of the death of *Paul* and *Peter;* that *they*, as truly as *Christ*, were a propitiation for the sins of the world; and that we are as truly justified by faith in *them*, as in *him;* and by *their* blood, as by *his?*

I shall now proceed,

III. To show, *That the Jews, according to the Unitarian doctrine, are unjustly charged with guilt in putting Christ to death.*

The Law of GOD, as given by *Moses, required the blasphemer to be stoned.* Christ, in his conversation with the *Jews*, recorded John v. declared himself to be *the Son of* GOD. By this phrase the *Jews*, as I mentioned in a former discourse, understood him to *declare, that himself was* GOD, or *equal with* GOD. Their own construction they declared to him, *For a good work we stone thee not; but because thou, being a man, makest thyself* GOD, John x. 33. *St. John* also, as I then observed, understood the phrase in the same manner. *Therefore*, he says, *the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that* GOD *was his father; making himself equal with* GOD. This is the Apostle's own construction of Christ's averment; and is plainly alleged by him as being that of the *Jews* also.

When Christ was brought before the *Sanhedrim*, after several vain attempts to convict him of any crime, the High Priest *adjured him*, that is, put him upon oath, *to tell him whether he was the Christ, the Son of the Blessed* GOD. In answer to this question thus solemnly put, Christ said, *I am;* and, as a proof, that he said this truly, added, *and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of Power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.* In reply to this declaration *the High Priest rent his clothes*, and declaring all further testimony needless, pronounced him guilty of blasphemy for this saying; in consequence of which, the Evangelists inform us, they all condemned him to death.

Now, it is evident, that Christ was understood by the Jews *to declare that he was equal to* GOD, and *was* GOD, by *asserting himself to be the Son of* GOD. Of this there cannot be a doubt, because it is asserted, both by the *Jews* themselves, and by the Evangelist. If, then, Christ was a man, merely; he was, for aught that I can see, truly a Blasphemer. For, when he declared himself to be GOD, or equal with GOD, he plainly declared GOD to be neither greater, wiser, nor better than himself. But, to assert in any form of words, that the infinite JEHOVAH is of the same character with a man, and possessed of no more greatness, excellency, or glory, than that which is human, would be acknowledged in any other case to be blasphemy; because it would be a denial of all the perfections of GOD, and an ascription to him of all the frailties of Man. If this be not blasphemy, what can be?

But if Christ was a blasphemer, he was justly put to death. The Law, which *He* as well as the *Jews*, acknowledged to have

been given by GOD himself, required the blasphemer to be stoned: as a blasphemer, therefore, he was according to the requisitions of a divine, and therefore a just, Law, deservedly condemned to death.

Thus according to this scheme the *Jews*, instead of being guilty in putting Christ to death, acted meritoriously; for they only obeyed the divine law.

But it will be said, Christ did not intend by this declaration to assert that he was GOD; nor that he was equal with GOD. This indeed is said, and must be said, by the abettors of the *Unitarian* schemes. I answer: It is clear, that the Jews thus understood him, and that he knew them thus to understand him. They had formerly attempted to stone him for using the same language; and had then told him, in express terms, the manner, in which they construed the phrase. The *Sanhedrim*, also, sufficiently explained to him their own views of it by pronouncing it blasphemy. In consequence of this mode of understanding the phrase, he saw them now about to imbrue their hands in his blood. If it was a mistake on their part, he was bound to remove it. He was bound not to suffer his own character to be stained, in *their* view, with the crime of blasphemy. He was bound to use language as he knew it would be understood. He was bound not to lose his own life, nor suffer them to incur the guilt of taking it away, merely through a mistake of theirs. If, then, they are supposed in this case to have sinned at all; they sinned only through a mistake, which Christ himself voluntarily declined to remove. The sin, therefore, so far as I can see, lies on this supposition, primarily at his door. What, then, shall we say of the solemn and awful charge, brought against the *Jews* by *St. Peter? Him ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified, and slain!* What shall we say of the whole body of Scriptural representations on this subject? What shall we say of the terrible destruction of their nation: of their judicial blindness: and all the calamities which had befallen them, as monuments of the divine indignation, for more than seventeen hundred years?

IV. *The Prophets and Apostles, according to the same doctrine, cannot be vindicated from leading mankind into the sin of Idolatry.*

The Prophets and Apostles have, in a great variety of places, called Christ GOD, The true GOD, The great GOD, The mighty GOD, JEHOVAH, and I AM. They have declared him to be Eternal, self-existent, incomprehensible, Almighty, Omnipresent, Omniscient, and immutable. They have attributed to him the creation, preservation, and government, of all things; and the acts of giving life, forgiving sin, judging the World, and rewarding both the righteous and the wicked. They have ascribed to him the infinite relations of Creator, Preserver, Possessor, Ruler, and Final Cause, of all things. Beyond this, they have on many occasions worshipped him themselves; and have taught us, that GOD requires him to be worshipped, and that he is in fact worshipped, by saints and angels in earth and heaven. They have also exhibited

Christ, when on earth, as challenging these things to himself, and as receiving them from others without reprobation or censure. They have further declared him to be the only Saviour of the World: a character evidently demanding infinite attributes; and, according to their account, challenged by JEHOVAH, as exclusively his own.

Beyond all this, they have informed us, that he was condemned to death, for declaring under the sanction of an oath, *that he was the Son of* GOD: a phrase which he knew was understood by them, to be no other than a declaration, *that he was* GOD. Yet, though knowing this; and though directly charged with blasphemy; although on two occasions they attempted to stone him, and on a third pronounced him guilty of death; instead of explaining, softening, or at all modifying, the declaration, he proceeded directly, in two of the instances, to allege proofs, that he used this declaration with exact truth and propriety; proofs, which in themselves are a direct arrogation of the divine character. The Scriptures of truth they also declare to be *his Word;* and inform us, that the Holy Ghost, who inspired them, received them from him; and that Christ himself, when promising them the gift of inspiration, personally told them this wonderful truth. In this account they have taught us, that the Scriptures, which they every where styled *the Word of* GOD, are no other than *the Law of Christ himself;* partly uttered by his own mouth, and partly taught by the HOLY SPIRIT in conformity to his pleasure; and accordingly in his own name, and by his own authority, explained, altered, and annulled, by him, as he thought proper. And that the HOLY SPIRIT, whom, as we shall see hereafter, they pronounce to be a divine person, was commissioned, and sent by him into the world, to execute his purposes; an act of authoriry on the part of Christ, to which there is no parallel in the Universe, except his own mission from the Father. Finally, in the view, which is given us of the heavenly system in the Revelation of St. John, we find the same exalted character completely recognized. In that world we behold him sitting on the throne of infinite dominion, styled *the Throne of* GOD *and the Lamb;* unfolding, and declared by the Heavenly Host to be worthy to unfold, the Book of GOD's counsels; which, they also declare, no being in the Universe to be worthy, or able, to do; being, together with the Father, the everlasting temple of Heaven; controlling all the affairs of this world, of heaven, and of hell; the light and glory of heaven; and the bestower of future and everlasting happiness. In all these wonderful characters he is also worshipped, in that glorious world, with the highest ascriptions, which were ever made, or which can be made, to JEHOVAH. *Worthy, they cry, is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. Every creature,* says St. John, *which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in*

them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him, that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever. Of all these things it is to be remarked, that they are expressed on every occasion, which admits them, and in every form of phraseology, which language can easily be supposed to allow; commence with the first chapter in the Bible; and terminate only with the last.

Now let me ask, Whether all these things are not a complete exhibition of Christ, as the proper object of Religious Worship? But the Apostles have directly, and fully, declared all these things. If, then, Christ is not God, have they not clearly so represented him, as to persuade mankind, that he is GOD; and that he is to be worshipped?

How is it possible, that their readers, and especially the plain men, who constitute ninety-nine hundredths of them; how is it possible, that any men, acknowledging the Apostles to have used language as other men use it, and so as to be understood by those, for whom they wrote; (an admission absolutely necessary to exculpate them from plain fraud) should distinguish between a person thus described, and the Being, who alone is the proper Object of Worship? What can their minds, what can any mind, add to this exhibition, to make such a Being more great, awful, lovely, glorious, and godlike? Do not these things include all, which we can conceive to be included in Infinite Perfection? Has any thing, superior to these, been ever published to mankind? Has any thing been published in any other instance, which can be compared with these?

But if Christ be not truly GOD, he cannot be worshipped without Idolatry. He himself says; and recites it as the command of GOD; *Thou shalt worship* JEHOVAH *thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.* Can inspired men then, writing a Revelation, the great end of which was to inculcate *the Unity of* GOD, *the Existence of but One* GOD, and *the supreme obligation, incumbent on all men, to worship him Only;* can such men have been directed by the Spirit of GOD, so to write as they have actually written? Could they, being *Jews*, with the Old Testament in their hands, have so written, even of themselves, *as naturally*, not to say necessarily, *to lead all their followers into the sin of Idolatry?* That they have so written, as naturally to produce this consequence, if Christ be not GOD, is unquestionable: because the great body of their followers have actually understood them to assert the Deity of Christ, and have actually worshipped him. The Scriptures therefore, written for the professed purpose of preventing idolatry, have, according to the scheme of my opponents, been the direct cause of promoting, and establishing it, among almost all those, who have believed them to be the word of GOD. Mr. *Belsham* accordingly pronounces the system, of which the worship of Christ is a leading principle, "*a pernicious system; a mischievous compound of impiety and idola-*

try." Lest it should be supposed, however, that those, who adopt this worship, have really been impious, let it be remarked, that Dr. Priestly himself expressly says, "*he considers the principles of Calvinism, as generally favourable to that leading virtue, Devotion; even an habitual and animated Devotion.*" Another Writer* also, no way favourable to these principles, says, in the British Encyclopedia,† "If we consider the character of the Calvinists," (whom he mentions together with several others) "when compared with that of their antagonists; we shall find, that they have excelled in no small degree in the practice of the most rigid and respectable virtues; and have been the highest honour of their own ages, and the best model for imitation to every age succeeding." But Calvinists to a man, have been worshippers of Christ: as have also been almost all other members of the Church universal; and to this idolatry, if it be just, the Scriptures have led them. Of course the guilt of leading mankind into that gross sin is, on this scheme, chargeable to the Prophets and Apostles. But can the Prophets and Apostles have led mankind into the abominable sin of idolatry? Can the principles, which lead to idolatry, be favourable to habitual and animated devotion? Can the men, who have excelled in the practice of the most rigid and respectable virtues; who have been the highest honour to their own age, and the best models for imitation to succeeding ages; have been regularly guilty of this sin? Can the system, which asserts, or involves, these things, be truth?

Can all, or any of, the things, which I have asserted concerning Christ from the Scriptures, *be true of a man*; or of *any created being?* Can a man, can an angel, be the First Cause, or Last End, the Preserver, Proprietor, Possessor, and Ruler, of all things? Can a creature be *the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express Image of his person; the Light of the world, the Propitiation for sin, the Saviour* of mankind, or the Object of religious worship? Can any religious man, on a death-bed, say, "*Gabriel receive my spirit?*" or "*Lay not the sin* of my murderers *to their charge?* Can *Gabriel* give life, raise the dead, or bestow immortal life? Can he judge the world, reward the righteous and the wicked, or be the glory, light, and temple, of heaven? What would be the impression, were a minister of the Gospel to say, *I Baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of Gabriel, and of the Holy Ghost?* or *the Grace of Gabriel, the Love of* God, *the Father, and the Communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen?* Would not these things beyond measure shock the minds of a Christian Assembly, as the most palpable blasphemy? Was there ever a minister, even an Arian, or a Socinian, who could bring himself thus to speak in such an Assembly? Would not this be, not merely comparing, or likening, one of the Angels to Jehovah, but placing him on the same level? Yet these things are said of Christ.

* Robert Forsythe, Esq. † Article Predestination.

Why are they said of him, if his nature be like that of Gabriel? Why are they *seemingly* said? Was it not perfectly easy for the Omniscient GOD to have said, if he chose to say it, *that Christ was a mere man, or a mere creature?* and so to have said this, that it would not have been misunderstood even by the plainest man? Did he not understand language sufficiently? Has it not been said in such a manner, as to be intelligible to all men, by *Arius*, *Socinus*, *Zuicker*, *Price*, *Priestly*, *Belsham*, and many others? Did any man ever mistrust, that they have not said it? Was not JEHOVAH more interested to say it, if it is true, than they were? and so to say it, as to be easily, generally, and certainly understood? Was he not more able? Did he not foresee all the doubts, difficulties, errors, misconstructions, and consequent sins and idolatries, if they have indeed been misconstructions and idolatries, arising from unhappy language, used in the Scriptures? Have not the *Prophets* who *spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost:* have not the *Apostles*, who *spake the things freely given to them of God, not in the words which man's wisdom taught, but which the Holy Ghost taught;* expressed the mind of God on this subject, and every other, in the very manner, chosen by God himself? Has not his infinite faithfulness and mercy, then, sufficiently guarded every honest mind against this erroneous sin?

But if Christ be not the true GOD, the great body of Christians have, in every age of the Church, wholly misunderstood the Scriptures concerning this most important doctrine, and mistaken, infinitely, the real character of their Saviour. Of course, the Scriptures have been so written, as that the natural interpretation of them is a source of total and dreadful error; even of that, which they themselves denounce in terms of the highest reprobation; viz. idolatry. For the interpretation, which has been given them by the great body of Christians, in every age and country in which they have existed, is beyond a controversy the natural interpretation. *That men, who first make a philosophical system of religion, and then endeavour to reconcile the Scriptures to it*, should understand them falsely, cannot be wondered at; but that they should be falsely understood by *the great body of mankind, who for their religion come to them only; and yet the way of holiness be still a highway, in which wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err*; is a position, which is yet to be explained.

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